

**THE EFFECT OF BERGSON'S THOUGHT ON
FRENCH ROMAN CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY AND
LITERARY THEORY UP TO 1939, WITH DETAILED
REFERENCE TO THE WORK OF JACQUES
MARITAIN, MAURICE BLONDEL, CHARLES PEGUY
AND CHARLES DU BOS**

Robert Geoffrey Harris

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



1978

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University of St. Andrews
October 1978

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ABSTRACT

Most research into Bergson's influence to date has failed to take enough account of the philosopher's interest in the spiritual or metaphysical dimension of life. In seeking to interpret Bergson's thought many have focussed upon 'la durée réelle' or 'l'élan vital' as the key concepts in his whole philosophy. If, instead, one were to begin with Bergson's main continuing preoccupation - at first inchoate and only later more fully developed - with spiritual activity in life, then the whole philosophy hangs together as a tapestry of one harmonious piece. Not only can it be clearly seen why Bergson opposes Kant and the positivists so vehemently, but it can also be understood why he eventually set his sights upon The two sources of morality and religion. In the eyes of many critics this work, far from completing a natural progression of thought, stands outside the main body of work as something ill-fitting and almost cavalier.

This thesis attempts to redress the balance by demonstrating how the spiritual and religious interpretation of life is central to Bergson's thought.

Having established this, I have assumed it likely that a lively Catholic interest in Bergson is something quite logical and natural. This proved to be the case. After all, the Catholics in France stood to gain or lose most by the introduction in intellectual circles of a new philosophical 'spiritualism'. They would obviously themselves have a vested interest in the discrediting of materialist and positivist philosophies.

However, scholars have not seen the connection between Bergson and Christian thought very clearly and no detailed research into this particular

field has been undertaken. I have consequently attempted to review both the general field of Catholic reactions in a largely chronological way and also the detailed ways in which Bergson's thought had an impact upon Catholic writers.

My main conclusion from this research is that Bergson's work lent itself to adaptation and alteration to something more orthodox in Catholic terms. However, it was some time before it was viewed in a favourable enough light for anything like this to be attempted. Much prejudice and misinterpretation surrounded Bergson for some years. Eventually, however, his theories made deep inroads into the mainstream of Catholic thought. His theories of perception and intuition, of movement and change, of static and dynamic religion, helped bring about a significant change in the development of twentieth century religious thought.

R.G. Harris

"TOUT CE QUI SERA PERDU PAR BERGSON
SERA NON PAS GAGNÉ PAR SAINT THOMAS
MAIS REGAGNÉ PAR SPENCER."

(C. Péguy, Oeuvres en Prose, 1909-1914,
La Pléiade, 1959, p. 1538.)

MEMORANDUM

This thesis is entirely my own work and has at no time been submitted for another degree.

Signed:

I certify that this statement is correct.

Signed:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my mother.

I should like to thank the following for their great help and encouragement

My supervisor Prof. A.H.T. Levi, University of St. Andrews
and especially Dr. S.W. Taylor, University of Bristol
and Dom Illtyd Trethowan, Downside Abbey
My typist Mrs. Anne Merriman
Also Dr. John Coulson, University of Bristol
 Prof. Henri Gouhier, 21 Boulevard Flandrin, Paris 16.
 Prof. Richard Griffiths, University of Cardiff
 Dr. A.E. Pilkington, University of Oxford
 M. Auguste Martin, Centre C. Péguy, 11 rue du Tabour, Orléans
 Jean and Madge Mouton, 51 Colehern Court, London SW5
 Ian Brayley, S.J., Campion House, Oxford
 Dr. Patricia Richardson, 70 Long Ashton Road, Long Ashton

My thanks are also owing to the librarians of the following:

Institut Catholique, rue d'Assas, Paris 6
Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, 8 place du Panthéon, Paris 5
Bibliothèque Nationale, 58 rue Richelieu, Paris 2
Sorbonne, 17 rue Saint Jacques, Paris 5
British Museum, Gt. Russell Street, London WC1
Heythrop College, 11 Cavendish Square, London W1
Downside Abbey, Stratton, Somerset
University of St. Andrews, Market Street, St. Andrews
University of Bristol, Queen's Road, Bristol 8
Bodleian Library and Taylor Institute, Oxford
University of London, Senate House and Birkbeck College,
Gower Street, London WC1

ABBREVIATIONS

All page references to Bergson's works listed hereafter are from Oeuvres (P.U.F., 1959). The abbreviations used for Bergson's individual books are as follows:

Essai or L'Essai

Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience (1889)

M.M. or (for absolute clarity)
Matière et Mémoire

Matière et Mémoire: Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit (1896)

E.C.

L'Evolution Créatrice (1907)

Les Deux Sources

Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion (1932)

P.M.

La Pensée et le Mouvant (1934)

Etudes berg.

refers to the series Etudes bergsoniennes and the volume number and date are given immediately afterwards

Ecrits et Paroles

refers to Henri Bergson: Ecrits et Paroles Vols. I-III (P.U.F., 1957-1958)

Further details on Bergson's works are to be found in the Bibliography at the back.

Where only a page reference is given, the work referred to is the same as in the previous quotation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

At a cursory glance the subject-matter of this work may appear to be a random selection of four important Catholic authors who happened to be active at the time of Bergson's greatest fame and influence. The question might then come to mind as to why these particular four had been chosen, for they seem unconnected in their field of work as well as in their aims and objectives. In this introductory passage I shall seek to justify my selection of authors for detailed study and hope to show how they promoted a renewal of interest in Bergson among Catholics which led eventually to a reassessment of his work.

I began researching the whole range of Bergson's influence, with a particular bias towards the literary reactions, where I expected to reap a good harvest; but in spite of indications to the contrary I soon discovered that the number of men influenced by Bergson in a thoroughgoing and profound manner was strictly limited, whereas the number tainted with the 'Bergsonian spirit' - not often readily attributable to Bergson directly - was considerably larger.

Contemporary periodicals around 1910 were fascinated by Bergson's apparently huge success as a lecturer and thinker. A. Tarde and H. Massis (pseudonym 'Agathon') took stock of Bergson's influence in L'Esprit de la Nouvelle Sorbonne (Mercure de France, 1911) and in Les Jeunes Gens d'Aujourd'hui (Id. 1913). These works are very general accounts of the literary vogues and fashions rather than a detailed analysis of leading ideas and their sources. The trend towards vagueness was to continue. In La Grande Revue's "Enquête sur

Bergson'¹, Jacques Rivière wrote:

Pour ne parler que de l'influence artistique de M. Bergson, je la crois nulle sur la prochaine génération. M. Bergson a formulé, après coup, avec une magnifique précision certains principes sur lesquels s'étaient appuyés inconsciemment les symbolistes, du moins ceux de la deuxième génération. (p. 750)

But, on the other hand, Henri Clouard sees Bergson's influence as all-pervasive:

La fraternité de l'oeuvre bergsonnienne avec la littérature est émouvante ... La philosophie intuitive de la durée s'accorde évidemment avec la valeur éclairante et pénétrante des puissances de la sensibilité et elle a contribué au climat dont la ligne va de Proust à Duhamel et même les poètes modernes qui veulent évoquer l'éternel dans l'instant. (Histoire de la littérature française du symbolisme à nos jours, No. I, Ed. A. Michal, 1947, p. 303)

The trend towards generalities displayed in these contradictory comments is continued by Gonzague Truc, who, in an emotional outburst, sees Bergson's pernicious influence everywhere and yet, strangely enough, nowhere in particular:

Notre roman est évidemment bergsonien, voyez Romain Rolland! Notre théâtre, qui, avec MM. Claudel, Henry Bataille, Maeterlinck et quelques autres, met en scène non plus des passions désintéressées, mais des états passionnels à leur stade primitif et dans leur inconscience native, ne l'est moins. Bergsoniennes aussi notre poésie et notre éloquence dans les balbutiements profonds de Péguy, et bergsonienne enfin notre philosophie, qui s'écarte de toute idée claire comme du feu et ne se complait, avec M. Bergson lui-même, que dans l'inconsistant et l'irachové. ("Belphegor et le monde bergsonien", L'Opinion, 26.4.19).

The lack of precision which could lead one man to deny Bergson any real influence and another to see it everywhere is typical of the vague way in which writers were reviewing Bergson's influence at the time.

1. A series of short articles, edited by G. Picard and G.-L. Tautain. La Grande Revue, 1914, No. 83 (pp. 544-561), No. 84 (pp. 111-129, 296-330, 513-529).

This was the first major problem encountered in my assessment of Bergson's impact. His influence in literature is essentially diffuse and it is difficult to see in most cases whether Bergson was merely a representative of his age, articulating its ideas and mirroring its preoccupations, or whether he actually did provoke and inspire original insights. A. Turquet-Milnes in Some modern French writers - a study in Bergsonism (R. MacBride, New York, 1921 [1st ed. 1916]) absolutely typifies the early approach and vaguely imagines that everything thought and sensed in the literature of the early twentieth century is inspired by the spirit of Bergsonism, which permeates all the cultural life of the time. But nothing is proved conclusively in this book and a person with a serious philosophical interest in Bergson can see evidence of a betrayal, because Bergson had many precise and very technical ideas to offer and, although his way of thinking did give rise to a general outlook or vision of life, this was nevertheless inspired by concrete and individual perceptions and arguments.

Even recent works often adopt the approach of seeking 'affinities' as opposed to exact influences: A.E. Pilkington's Bergson and his influence (O.U.P., 1976) only includes Péguy as a directly influenced disciple and S.K. Kumar in Bergson and the stream of consciousness novel (Blackie & Son Ltd., London, Glasgow, 1962) states his aims as follows:

My main purpose is, therefore, not to establish Bergson's direct influence on the novelists whom I discuss: I am rather concerned to bring out the parallelism between the notion of the stream of consciousness as it appears in these novelists and the Bergsonian theory of flux.
(p. viii, Italics in original)

More particular influences are detected by Floris Delattre in "Le bergsonisme et la littérature" in Revue de l'enseignement des langues vivantes of 1922 (No. 39), p. 254 -- on P. Claudel, J. Romain, C. Péguy,

E. Clermont and Marcel Proust. In Französischer Geist im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert¹ Ernst Curtius considers that Bergsonism has influenced the ideas of A. Gide, A. Suarès, R. Rolland, M. Proust and C. Péguy. In addition, according to Curtius, Bergson stimulated modernist theological thought:

Auch das religiöse Leben erfährt die Wirkungen der Bergsonschen Gedankenwelt. Die katholischen Modernisten finden in Bergsons Kritik des Rationalismus eine Legitimierung des mystischen Denkens und bemühen sich, auf die Lehren der neuen Philosophie eine neue Apologetik zu begründen. (p. 39)

I have followed up this line of thought in Chapter Five.

The best overall account of Bergson's influence in literature is to be found in Roméo Arbour's Henry Bergson et les lettres françaises (Lib. J. Corti, 1956). As regards the literary figures already mentioned, most have furnished scant evidence of real influence. And at best, Bergson's ideological relationship with Marcel Proust is one of affinities of thought, even though Proust became Bergson's nephew through the latter's marriage, and even though Proust studied under Bergson at the Sorbonne between 1891 and 1893².

In Le Temps newspaper on 12th November 1913, Proust stated that he would not have been ashamed to admit any debt to Bergson, but the fact of the matter was, as he put it, that "mon oeuvre est dominée par la distinction entre la mémoire involontaire et la mémoire volontaire, distinction qui, non seulement ne figure pas dans la philosophie de M. Bergson, mais est même contredite par elle" (quoted in Souvenirs sur Marcel Proust by R. Dreyfus - Grasset, 1926, p. 289). Despite valiant

1. 1st ed. 1919; quoted here from 1952 edition (A. Francke, A.G. Bern).

2. See Henri Bergson: Essais et Témoignages, Eds. Béguin and Thévenaz, Neuchâtel, 1943, p. 125.

efforts, A.E. Pilkington (op. cit.) fails to prove convincingly any real influence from Bergson, while Joyce Megay (Bergson et Proust: Essai de mise au point de la question de l'influence de Bergson sur Proust, Vrin, 1976) comes out very decisively on the side of Proust's lack of dependence. The really significant influence, she contends, was one of Proust's other teachers, Alphonse Darlu¹.

Proust's personal contacts with Bergson were "peu nombreux" (p. 149) and Bergson is not even mentioned in Proust's early correspondence. Mme. Megay thus supports Proust's own protestations:

En consultant les Carnets et les Cahiers de Proust, conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale, nous avons pu constater qu'il n'existe aucun indice d'un engouement même passager pour la philosophie bergsonienne. Bien au contraire, chaque fois qu'il est question de Bergson dans les Cahiers, Proust déclare son opposition aux vues du philosophe. (p. 149)

At the time when Proust was being described often as a Bergsonian novelist, he mentioned the philosopher more often in his correspondence (1920-1922). He still denied any influence and pointed to a number of dissimilarities between his own and Bergson's preoccupations. Nevertheless, the consensus of opinion at that time² was that Proust must have admired Bergson and drawn from him, and that, therefore, his denials were simply to maintain his reputation and independence.

After reading several of Romain Rolland's works, including Jean Christophe³, I failed to discern anything that was directly attributable to Bergson, although it is easy to see why others might imagine that

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1. See also H. Bonnet's Alphonse Darlu 1849-1921, Le maître de philosophie de Marcel Proust (Nizet, 1961).
 2. There is a good bibliography of this in Mme. Megay's book.
 3. 4 vols. L'Aube, Le Matin, L'Adolescent, La Révolte (Lib. P. Ollendorff, 1905-1912).

Rolland's introspective sensitivity and romantic spirit are derived from the Bergsonism prevalent at the time he wrote. This is a good example of what André Gide meant in his Journal when he wrote that "plus tard, on croira découvrir partout son influence sur notre époque, simplement parce que lui-même est de son époque, et qu'il cède sans cesse au mouvement. D'où son importance représentative" (Journal, Gallimard, 1948, p. 783). Although Gide read some Bergson (see Journal, pp. 269, 843), he had difficulty with the Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience and came to the conclusion that "ce qui me déplaît dans la doctrine de Bergson c'est tout ce que je pense déjà sans qu'il le dise, et tout ce qu'il y a de flatteur, de caressant même, pour l'esprit" (p. 782).

Paul Claudel's Journal (2 vols., Gallimard, 1968, 1969) likewise evinces very slight interest in Bergson and certainly no more in him than in any other thinker to whom Claudel's eclectic mind turned its attention. Bergson is quoted on several occasions: for example, "dormir, c'est se désintéresser" (I, p. 458) and "Toute action, toute fabrication est un affaiblissement de la contemplation" (II, p. 72); but Bergson's ideas are also attacked: "Panta rei, d'Éréaclite et des bergsoniens. Leur erreur est de considérer simplement le fait de l'écoulement et non pas celui de l'origine et de la source, le mouvement étant toujours le moyen d'une fonction ..." (II, p. 161). Bergson remains a source of ideas but does not claim the soul of Claudel: on the contrary, Claudel would like to lay claim to Bergson's soul and is only really interested in seeing how close Bergson is moving towards Catholicism¹.

Claudel's own conversion could not possibly have owed anything to Bergson, whose first book was published in 1889, three years after Claudel

1. See e.g., p. 656.

became a Catholic, and Claudel's main themes and ideas owe little or nothing to Bergson. Claudel was in fact not of the generation most susceptible to Bergson's strongest influence; that is, between 1905 and 1915¹.

In Le renouveau religieux d'après le roman français de 1886-1914 (Les belles lettres, 1934), Elizabeth Fraser echoes the common conception of the period that the symbolist poets owed a great deal to Bergson, at least in their aesthetic theory:

... à l'instar de Bergson, ils [les symbolistes] ont compris que 'la vie psychique n'est pas une suite simple, mais un ensemble et un processus continu de faits simples', c'est donc la réverbération intime des stimulants venus du dehors qu'ils cherchent à communiquer intuitivement, l'écho profond, dans le jeu et dans l'intensité variée de ces éléments (p. 61).

However, on closer inspection of individual poets it is very difficult to see who is included in this general category. Eméric Fiser (Le symbole littéraire, J. Corti, 1941) indicates that Bergson and Mallarmé, even though they taught in the same lycée (Rollin) for a short time, did not know one another (see p. 38). He also holds to the thesis that symbolist theory - including Proust's - antedated Bergson's philosophy and the influence was possibly in the other direction - from the symbolists to Bergson: "Nous découvrirons la filiation de cette pensée, aussi bien avec la tendance symboliste qu'avec l'esthétique de Proust" (p. 15)². This idea is reinforced when Fiser insists that much symbolist theory is not in line with Bergsonism and yet eventually infiltrated his philosophy insidiously:

1. N.B., Conversion dates: F. Jammes 1905, J. and R. Maritain 1906, C. Péguy 1908, J. Lotte 1908, R. Valéry-Radot 1910, E. Psichari 1913, H. Massis 1913.

2. In fact there is even less evidence that Proust influenced Bergson than the other way round.

Nous verrons, d'abord comment le Bergsonisme s'oppose au symbolisme, et ensuite, comment le symbolisme exclu par Bergson, triomphe dans sa philosophie (p. 15).

Among symbolists Paul Valéry also did not know Bergson's work to any extent and had the most hazy conception as to what it contained. This has been borne out by A.E. Pilkington (op. cit.) who researched the field thoroughly: "Valéry appears to have had only a slight first-hand acquaintance with Bergson's books" (p. 99). He only read L'Evolution Créatrice in the 1920s and never read L'Essai or Matière et Mémoire. Valéry wrote to Thibaudet in 1912:

Puis-je me permettre à présent de vous présenter quelques remarques de fait? La plus importante concerne la réalité des rapports de ma pensée avec celle de M. Bergson. Or l'influence de mon illustre et vénéré confrère sur moi n'a pu se produire. C'est une question de chronologie et de biographie. Mes idées se sont faites entre 1892 et '95. J'entends ma manière ou méthode de juger. En ce temps-là qui connaissait Bergson? D'ailleurs, je n'ai pas fait d'études philosophiques ... (Pref. to R.P. Gillet's Paul Valéry et la Métaphysique, Flammarion, 1935, pp. 7-8).

Thus, as regards Bergson and Valéry there is not a strong case for direct influence. I then turned my attention briefly to Francis Jammes, the Catholic poet, and apart from very general similarities again drew a blank in terms of concrete evidence of influence¹. Jammes' blithe spirit is far removed from the tortuous logic of philosophy. If ideas loosely connected with Bergson's can be detected this is more by chance than intention and there is certainly no depth in the application.

It is in fact far more likely, as Roméo Arbour has it, that the symbolists influenced one another and had roots in the nineteenth century than that they assimilated Bergsonism. There had already been at least

1. See Rose Dyson, Les Sensations et la Sensibilité chez Francis Jammes (Lib. E. Droz, Geneva, 1954).

one pioneering generation of R gnier, Verhaeren, Maeterlinck and Laforgue, for example, before Bergson's emergence to fame. Arbour concludes from this:

Si la doctrine de Bergson, qui viendra bient t, peut souffrir un rapprochement avec le contenu de cette po sie, c'est dans la mesure o  celle-ci a conserv  quelque chose du legs de ses ma tres: po sie de l'homme int rieur, recherche d'une r alit  invisible (p. 225).

In the most general terms it seems fair to say that some of the symbolists' aims were inconsistent with Bergsonism, for they attempted to immobilize the flux, to encapsulate the stream of consciousness in fixed expressions and to transform movement into statuesque art forms.

Jules Romains might have been considered as a possible Bergsonian. In 1912 he developed his poetic theory called 'unanimisme' and E. Henriot suggests that "Bergson en a donn  la justification m taphysique" (A quoi r vent les jeunes gens, Champion, 1912, p. 36). Some of Romains' ideas in poetry do indeed have a Bergsonian ring to them: for example:

L'allure des passants n'est presque pas physique
Ce ne sont plus des mouvements, ce sont des rythmes ...
(From La Vie Unanime, quoted in Arbour, p. 247)

But some of his other ideas are in direct contrast to the individualism of Bergsonism:

Je m prise mon coeur et ma vie intime:
Le r ve de la ville est plus beau que le mien.

Je cesse d'exister tellement je suis tout.
(Ibid., in Arbour, p. 252)

However, Romains' aesthetic theory was fully developed by 1903, according to Arbour, who adds that the traceable influences on it are Hugo, Goethe, Baudelaire, Nietzsche and Verhaeren.

Henri Bramond's aesthetic theory similarly owes little to Bergson. His main work of this type, Fri re et Po sie (Grasset, 1926), is dedicated

to Maurice Blondel and many of his ideas are derived from Blondel's philosophy¹. Towards the end of the book Bremond makes another general acknowledgement and specifically snubs modern philosophy outside Blondel:

Ces idées, qui ne sont pas neuves, mais que les philosophes, à l'exception de Maurice Blondel, n'ont peut-être pas encore abordées de front, demanderaient un développement infini (p. 215).

Consequently, I have deemed it better to examine the affinities between Blondel himself and Bergson, rather than those between Bergson and Bremond.

Perhaps it would prove more fruitful to seek Bergson's influence through the work of his pupils at the Lycée Henri IV and the Collège de France. The Tharaud brothers (Notre cher Péguy, Lib. Plon, 1926, 2 vols.) reveal that certain well-known names regularly attended Bergson's lectures. There are several waves: the first around 1890-1897 at the Lycée Henri IV, which included A. Thibaudet, E. Iubac and D. Mornet; the second around 1897-1900, which included J. Chevalier, P. Hazard, A. Renaudet, E. Clermont, R. Gillouin and C. Péguy (who alone stayed on later); and the third, attending from 1900 onwards, with H. Massis, G. Sorel, T. de Visan, J. and R. Maritain and E. Psichari among their number. Raïssa Maritain later wrote: "Péguy, et Psichari, Jacques et moi, nous formions un quatuor excellent, parce que des perspectives de vie spirituelle et certitudes intellectuelles s'ouvraient à nouveau devant nous" (Les Grandes Amitiés I, D. de Brouwer, 1941, pp. 124-125).

The predominance of Catholics (or later converts) among this number

1. Some of these ideas also overlap with Bergson's. See the detailed comparison between Blondel and Bergson in Chapter Six.

provided me with a key to an area of Bergson's influence which had not been systematically analyzed in France or elsewhere. It soon became clear that the Catholic world was in a ferment over Bergson's philosophy; the first powerful answer to the materialistic positivism of the nineteenth century. Bergson was by and large received hostilely at first, but certainly his work provoked a large-scale reaction¹.

The leading protagonists to emerge from this ferment were Charles Péguy and Jacques Maritain, both of whom knew each other and Bergson personally through the lectures. Péguy became Bergson's most ardent supporter, while Maritain felt it his first duty to point out the differences between Bergsonism and Catholic orthodoxy - that is to say, Thomism. Upon further reading it became abundantly clear to me that Jacques Maritain has since been misjudged in being attacked as a rigid opponent of Bergsonism and all modern philosophy. That this is far from the truth can be seen in Chapters Seven and Eight. Maritain had in fact a remarkable affinity of spirit with Bergson, whom he greatly admired, and his later philosophy owes more to Bergson's method of observation and immediate insight than to chains of logic and the doctrinal formulae of the past, although of course this must be reconciled with Maritain's first loyalty to Thomas Aquinas.

The Catholic Church of the early twentieth century displayed two major tendencies in philosophy (with internal divisions in both camps) - the orthodox Thomist approach to doctrine and the modernist or independent restatement of doctrine in the light of new ideas. Here again misconceptions abound. If Maritain can be regarded as the main upholder of

1. I have attempted to give details and chronology of this in Chapter Three.

Catholic orthodoxy in Thomist terms, then Blondel can be viewed as the leading independent Catholic thinker - not a 'modernist' in the sense of calling all orthodoxies into question but rather in the sense of setting out with a lack of premises or presuppositions to discover whether faith can be justified rationally to an agnostic. Because of his representative importance, as well as from the point of view of his position in relation to Bergsonism, I have examined Blondel alone in Chapter Six. But if Maritain and Blondel are leading figures then they should also be seen in perspective, and therefore the main strands of Catholic philosophy are also further examined in a broader context¹.

The idea of limiting the subject-matter to Catholic writers appeared promising on another count. Such a study would be integrated because of its very nature - all of the writers having not only an ideology in common but often mutual friendship or personal acquaintance. There is no comprehensive study of the field; the nearest approach being Etienne Gilson's Le philosophe et la théologie (Fayard, 1960) and then there is only a general chapter (3) on Bergsonism with no detailed comments on individuals. It was fascinating to trace the ramifications and outcome of the debate over Bergson between 1910 and 1920, for it led to some surprising conclusions. Bergson's influence gradually emerged as a significant and telling force for change in the methods and language of Catholic philosophy. It also encouraged something of a change of heart for Jacques Maritain and led to a general reinterpretation of Thomas Aquinas' doctrine itself among certain of his disciples.

The important general works on Catholic philosophy of this period include Georges Van Riet's L'Epistémologie Thomiste (Bib. Phil. de Louvain,

1. See Chapters Three, Four and Five.

1946) which limits its sights to the subtle but important arguments within the Thomist branch of Catholic thought; Roger Aubert's Le problème de l'Acte de Foi (E. Warry, Louvain, 3rd ed., 1958) which is not limited to a school of thought but to a particular theme within metaphysics; Jacques Chevalier's Histoire de la Pensée, Vol. IV (Flammarion, 1966), which examines broadly the scope of all philosophical thought up to 1939 but from a specifically Catholic viewpoint, and A-D Sertillanges' Le christianisme et les philosophes, Vol. II (Aubier-Montaigne, 1941) which attempts to do the same but in a more cavalier fashion. In English there is the fairly comprehensive recent work by F.C. Copleston, S.J., in his History of Philosophy series - Vol. IX, Maine de Biran to Sartre (Search Press, London, 1975). None of these works relates Bergsonism to Catholic thought in a systematic or extensive way and in most Bergson's influence is restricted to a few obvious admirers. Only Chevalier appears to have suspected that Bergson made a more widespread and decisive impression than had been realized before.

The two main mistakes to be made about Bergson's influence, therefore, are to make it too diffuse and lacking in precision or, alternatively, to limit it too severely. As time has gone by more writers have avoided the problem by comparing Bergson's philosophy with a single writer's thought. In this way Bergson has been compared with Ruskin (Ruskin et Bergson - F. Delattre, Clarendon Press, Oxon., 1947), Plotinus (Henri Bergson et Plotin - L. Delaunay Siraudeau, Angers, 1919), R. Eucken (E. Hermann - Eucken & Bergson, J. Clarke & Co., London, 1912), C. Péguy (A. Henry - Bergson - maître de Péguy, Ed. Elzévir, 1948), (A. Béguin - Péguy et Bergson, L'Amitié Charles Péguy, Orléans, 1952), A. Thibaudet (L. Bopp - In Henri Bergson: Essais et Témoignages, Neuchatel, 1943), P. Valéry (J.C. O'Neill - In Mod. Lang. Association, March 1951),

P. Teilhard de Chardin (M. Barthélémy-Madaule -- Bergson et Teilhard de Chardin, Ed. du Seuil, 1963), C. Du Bos (B. Halda In Etudes Bergsoniennes, Vol. 9, P.U.F., 1970, pp. 159-200), M. Proust (J. Megay, op. cit.) and A.E. Pilkington has compared Bergson with four thinkers, J. Benda, P. Valéry, M. Proust and C. Péguy (Bergson and his influence, O.U.P., 1976). This is in no way an exhaustive list¹.

The next problem to solve was how to restrict any study of Bergson's literary influence. Were such minor figures as E. Clermont, E. Psichari and J. Lotte to be involved? After making a brief survey of the works produced by these authors I decided to exclude them. The subject matter of their works was hardly philosophical - not even in the sense in which A. Camus, for example, is a philosophical novelist - and any comparison with Bergson's philosophy would have appeared to be artificial, pretentious and externally imposed. It then occurred to me that the field of aesthetic and literary theory could prove a more rewarding area of research, for in this domain one is analyzing more abstract ideas and their implications. Also, Bergson was greatly interested in artistic creativity and if he did not write a full-length account on this nevertheless there are numerous instances of his treatment of such matters. In addition, he held distinct and original views on the subject². Indeed, he is the artist's philosopher par excellence, and the material world was for him, as for the artist, "un ensemble d'images" (Oeuvres, P.U.F., 1959, p. 161).

This idea became even more attractive later, as Maritain's own

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1. See further the bibliography on Bergson and Catholicism at the back.
 2. This is outlined in L. Adolphe's La dialectique des images chez Bergson (P.U.F., 1951) and in the first half of R. Arbour's Henri Bergson et les lettres francaises (J. Corti, 1956).

aesthetic theory actually shed light on the extent to which he had assimilated Bergson's teachings. Moreover, a study of Péguy's literary theories and techniques has not been attempted in much detail with regard to Bergson's influence, whereas studies of the Bergsonian origins of his wider preoccupations have been undertaken more than once¹.

The connected field of literary criticism was also worthy of attention and two leading candidates for further research presented themselves - Charles Du Bos and Albert Thibaudet. Both had moved into Catholicism after much of their early work had been completed. Both had undergone distinct Bergsonian influence. Thibaudet had even written a two-volume work on Le Bergsonisme (NRF, 1923)²; largely an abstract account of Bergson's thought but also demonstrating Thibaudet's own enthusiasm for "La philosophie nouvelle" and including his own extensions of Bergson's thought. Part of his aim is to "amorcer le dialogue sur des points de la philosophie que M. Bergson n'a pas touchés" (p. 12). Thibaudet claimed to have learned certain things of importance from Bergson:

Résister aux enthousiasmes et antipathies spontanés, réagir contre tous les automatismes, et surtout contre le plus dangereux, celui du mécanisme intellectuel que nous sommes donné à nous-mêmes, envisager chaque problème sous sa figure particulière, avec un corps individuel que ne saurait habiller un vêtement fait en série, tenir à l'unité réelle de cette attitude plus qu'à l'unité factice des résultats (Le Bergsonisme, p. 8).

1. See Chapter Nine.

2. In this he wrote of his own debt: "Il n'est pas de pensée contemporaine à laquelle je doive plus qu'à celle de M. Bergson. J'ai été autrefois son élève, et j'en tiens un certain nombre de directions d'esprit" (p. 8).

The case of Du Bos bore great similarities to Thibaudet's - but here Bergson had not only influenced the critic's ideas but had stimulated the very touchstone and starting-point of his criticism; his method or technique of analyzing a writer's work. To have dedicated two chapters to individual literary critics would have involved too much repetition and covered too much of the same ground, and so I decided that Du Bos had been more profoundly affected and that in any case the development of a method of criticism inspired by Bergson was something worth scrutinizing in detail. Thibaudet had after all laid out his assessment of Bergson's philosophy and acknowledged his own debt in the clearest possible way in Le Bergsonisme, whereas Du Bos' reaction was more complex and obscure. Like Péguy, he had adapted and made use of the raw material of the philosophy for his own purposes and objectives.

Du Bos would therefore suitably complete a work, the main purpose of which would be to highlight the ways in which Bergson's ideas had been actively assimilated, adapted and re-used with new ends in view. The aim would not be to prove that Bergson's ideas had been accepted passively and reiterated in this case or that, nor how they had been added to a writer's intellectual armoury, but how they had been employed in other spheres of activity and been invested with new significance and intent.

The Catholic church, with its own firm viewpoints and tenets of faith to defend through rational argument, would provide an ideal example of the way in which ideas could be rejected for certain reasons and incorporated for others, and also, since Bergson's philosophy is interesting above all

to a metaphysician or religious thinker¹, the destiny of his ideas in the Catholic intellectual life of the early twentieth century is well worthy of observation.

Finally, in an account of the following type it is essential to restrict oneself not only in terms of the breadth of the field to be studied but also in terms of the time-scale to be envisaged. There are certain important figures who would certainly claim some attention if the time-scale were extended, because their work displays signs of Bergson's influence: I am thinking especially of Père Teilhard de Chardin and Emmanuel Mounier, but these must be considered as men of a second generation on whom the influence of one person of a previous generation, such as Bergson, was no longer so direct nor so central. There is moreover already a lengthy tome called Bergson et Teilhard de Chardin by Mme. M. Barthélémy-Madaule (Ed. du Seuil, 1963). The major work of such men as Teilhard and Mounier was published after 1939 and for this reason I have deliberately excluded them from the scope of this study. It might also have been interesting to follow up the career of Bergsonism in more detail in the Louvain school after Maréchal, but that must likewise be precluded from this work, on similar grounds.

1. The case for this is argued in the second chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BERGSON'S RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

Henri Louis Bergson was born in rue Lamartine in Paris on 18th October 1859, the second son of a Polish Jew, Michel Bergson, and Catherine née Levison, from Doncaster, England. His early schooling took place at the Lycée Condorcet between 1868 and 1878. He showed his academic prowess at an early age by winning prizes in rhetoric (1875), philosophy (1876) and mathematics (1877). On 21st July 1876 Bergson was awarded the 'bachelier ès lettres' - the 'bachelier ès sciences' followed on 11th July 1877 and almost a year later (May 1878) he obtained the 'licencié ès lettres'. In August of that year he entered the Ecole Normale Supérieure in the 'faculté de lettres', finished second in the entrance examination behind Jean Jaurès, the future socialist writer and politician. Then he studied under such as Léon Ollé-Laprune (Blondel's mentor) and Emile Boutroux. He completed the courses there in August 1881 and in the 'Agrégation de Philosophie' finished second, this time ahead of Jaurès and behind a certain Lesbazeilles.

On 20th September 1881 Bergson's application to teach philosophy at Lycée St. Brièuc was declined; however, he was accepted at Lycée d'Angers and remained there until 4th April 1882, when he was promoted to 'professeur de philosophie' at Ecole Supérieure d'Angers. He then moved from school to school¹ until reaching the Collège de France in 1908.

1. From 28th September 1883 he was at Lycée Blaise Pascal de Clermont-Ferrand. He also took classes at the University of Clermont-Ferrand from 1884. Then in September 1888 he transferred to the Collège Rollin and later moved to Lycée Henri IV in Paris as 'professeur suppléant'. He became an official teacher on 14th October 1890 and remained there nearly eight years until February 1898.

Meanwhile in 1892 Bergson married Mlle. Louise Neuburger and his only child, Jeanne, was born a year later. In 1894 Bergson unsuccessfully applied for a post at the Sorbonne. He tried again in 1898 and this time his rejection rankled even more with his disciple, Charles Péguy, than with Bergson himself. Nevertheless, in the previous year he had been appointed 'chargé de cours' at the Ecole Normale Supérieure. He then sought the chair of modern philosophy at the Collège de France but was rejected in favour of Gabriel Tarde. He was advised to apply for the chair in Greek and Latin philosophy instead and was duly appointed to it on 1st April 1900. Bergson remained at the Collège de France until 1921, although on 9th November 1904 he reapplied for Gabriel Tarde's chair and was accepted and transferred. Because of this, Bergson was well versed in the whole history of philosophical thought. It is most significant that between 1898 and 1904 - the time he was preparing L'Evolution Créatrice (pub. 1907) - he was preoccupied with Greek philosophy. In that work is to be found a severe attack on the static conceptualism of Aristotle (see pp. 747-769) and many ideas derived from Plotinus the neo-Platonist.

After two masterpieces of philosophy - L'Essai (1889) and Matière et Mémoire (1896) - the honours finally began to come to Bergson. On 14th December 1901 he was elected to the Académie des sciences morales et politiques. He later became its President (1913-1914). He was also regularly attending the Société française de philosophie from 1901. He became a 'chevalier' of the Légion d'honneur in 1902 and then an 'officier' in 1907 and 'commander' in 1919.

In the year 1909-1910 Bergson took Sabbatical leave to give lectures in England and to devote time to his studies. In 1911 the University of Oxford conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Science. He lectured there in May on "La perception du changement" (see Mélanges, pp. 383-914),

then at Birmingham on "Life and consciousness" (pp. 915-938), and, finally, in September he spoke at the University of London on "The nature of the soul" (pp. 944-959).

Continuing to build an international reputation, in the early months of 1913 Bergson visited the United States, lecturing at Columbia, Princeton and Harvard¹. He returned to the States again in 1917 and made his third and final visit between June and August 1918.

During this period Bergson also travelled to Edinburgh to deliver the Gifford lectures on "The problem of personality" (April-May 1914) (Mélanges, pp. 1051-1071) and went to Madrid in May 1916 for lectures on "l'âme humaine" and "la personnalité" (Mélanges, pp. 1200-1215 and pp. 1215-1235).

1914 was a fateful year for Bergson, as for Europe at large. He was elected to the Académie Française and became President of the Académie des sciences morales et politiques, but, on the other side of the coin, had his three main works placed on the Papal Index².

From the end of 1924 Bergson's health rapidly deteriorated through a type of rheumatism which finally condemned him to a wheelchair. In preparing Les Deux Sources (1932) he often had, as Floris Delattre recalls, the frustration of counting "par minutes, plutôt que par heures, le temps dont je dispose pour mon travail" (Mélanges, p. 1493, 11.3.29). In 1921 he had to retire from teaching at the Collège de France and Edouard LeRoy³ replaced him. He was still active in other spheres, for in 1922 he became a member of the Conseil de l'Ordre and was elected to the League of Nations' committee

1. The Columbia lectures are outlined in Mélanges, pp. 978-983.

2. For full text see Mélanges, p. 1089.

3. See Chapter Five.

of twelve for international intellectual co-operation and became its President¹. That same year, on 6th April, Bergson held a discussion at home with Albert Einstein and in the same year his comments on Einstein's relativity theory emerged².

In 1928 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. His closest friends at the time were Jacques Chevalier, the Catholic Professor of Philosophy at the University of Grenoble, and B. Romeyer, Catholic Professor of Philosophy at Le Puy, who made visits every year between 1932 and 1939³. Bergson said to Chevalier: "Je ne suis pas votre maître, mais votre ami", and added that, "il y avait des affinités préexistantes entre nos pensées" (Entretiens avec H. Bergson, Lib. Plon, 1959, p. 55 [30.12.23]).

Bergson read widely through the 1920s in the field of morality, religion and mysticism, in preparing for his Deux Sources (1932), after which he published very little new work, except a few textual revisions to old articles in the collection, La Pensée et le Mouvant (1934). Bergson died in occupied France, a Jew by choice, in solidarity with his persecuted blood brothers, but a Catholic by inclination. Chevalier records these words of Bergson, on 4th April 1938: "Je reconnais que le catholicisme est l'achèvement du judaïsme. Mais ici surgit un second obstacle, que je n'ai pu encore surmonter ... au moment où s'apprête, je le sens, une formidable vague d'antisémitisme, qui frappera mes coreligionnaires ... Que ma conversion publique ... puisse être exploitée pour des fins apologétiques peu m'importe. Mais il me serait très pénible qu'elle puisse donner un

1. He was forced to resign in 1925.

2. The discussion is recorded in Mélanges, pp. 1340-1347. Discée at Simultanéité is reproduced in Mélanges, pp. 57-244.

3. For further information see Chapter Four.

argument aux persécuteurs de ma race ..." (Entretiens, p. 282). Bergson in fact called for a priest to administer the rite of extreme unction on his deathbed, but he died before his arrival, on 4th January 1941, aged 81¹. Paul Valéry delivered the news of Bergson's death to the Académie Française (9.1.41), while J. Chevalier persuaded the Head of State, Maréchal Pétain, to send a telegram of sympathy to Bergson's widow. Bergson was buried in the village of Garches, but a plaque in the Panthéon commemorates his death with the words: "A Henri Bergson, philosophe dont l'oeuvre et la vie ont honoré la France et la pensée humaine".

What Professor Henri Gouhier wrote in his introduction to Bergson's Oeuvres (P.U.F., 1959, p. vii) is substantially true - namely, that Bergson's philosophy "tient tout entière en quatre ouvrages: Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience, Matière et Mémoire, l'Evolution Créatrice et Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion". However, Bergson did write two other full-length works, a large number of articles and maintained a copious correspondence. All of these help to clarify some of the misunderstandings that have constantly prejudiced Bergson's reputation².

It is interesting to note that, while only eighteen years spanned the publication of Bergson's first three works, the public had to wait

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1. This was a Père Lelièvre. Bergson was not baptized, either, as evidenced by the letter from his widow to Emmanuel Mounier of 9.9.1941 (published in the Gazette de Lausanne of that date).
 2. There is a detailed bibliography of Bergson's works at the end. The complete published works can now be read in Oeuvres, Mélanges (both edited by A. Robinet and H. Gouhier) and in Henri Bergson: Ecrits et Paroles (P.U.F., 1957-1958, 3 vols.) edited by A. Béguin and A. Thévenaz. There is further unpublished material in the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet and Bibliothèque Victor Cousin in Paris. The former houses books from Bergson's own library, bequeathed by his daughter, as well as a growing "fonds Bergson": the latter is directed by M. Jean Nabest and houses "un fonds d'archives bergsoniennes", including D. Roustan's lecture notes from Bergson's courses on Plotinus (1897-1898, 1901-1902).

25 years after E.C. for Bergson's definitive views on ethical and religious questions.

The Americans showed more interest than the British in Bergson's philosophy, perhaps because at first it was (wrongly) associated with William James's pragmatism. The two men were also good friends¹. Most translations of Bergson's works into English appeared simultaneously in England and the States, but l'Evolution Créatrice first emerged in New York (1911). Every work was translated by a different person or team. Sometimes a considerable period elapsed between the first French publication and the appearance of a translation: for example, the Essai was not in English until 1910 - 21 years after its original publication. On the other hand, between 1910 and 1911, in the space of one year, three of Bergson's works became obtainable in English². This reflects the time of Bergson's maximum popularity in France but only the beginnings of his influence in England.

In the "legs Jeanne Bergson" of the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet it is possible to scrutinize the books which comprised Bergson's own library. It gives the impression of diversity but within a relatively limited field. It shows Bergson's obvious penchant for abstract thought - whether in the field of politics, aesthetics, religion or philosophy itself, he is interested in the principles of the matter and the theory behind the subject. He wants to research into the ultimate problems - the nature of time and

1. In 1911 Bergson wrote a preface called "Vérité et Réalité" to James's book Pragmatism (1911). This appears in P.M., pp. 1440-1450. He also wrote a preface to W. James: Extraits de sa correspondance (Trans. F. Delattre and M. Le Breton, 1924). Bergson and James wrote to each other from 1902 until James's death in August 1910. They met each other in May 1905 and again in October 1908. Bergson wrote to Th. Ribot (10.7.05) that James was "un philosophe dont je ne dirai jamais assez combien je l'aime et je l'admire" (Mélanges, p. 657).

2. See Bibliography at the back.

eternity, the existence of God and the meaning of human life. But it is true to say that a fascination with man and his activities predominates: man as a biological entity¹, man as a creative artist and inventor², man as a political animal, man as a thinker and man as a spiritual entity. Books on the last subject range from Je lis dans les destinées, la clairvoyance et ses médiums by P. Ferthuny to l'Inspiration de la Bible by G. Pouget. Bergson himself states his chief preoccupations in the following terms: "D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous? Voilà des questions vitales ..." (Energie Spirituelle, p. 815). His philosophy is not a purely academic exercise. As Jacques Chevalier says of Bergson: "La philosophie ne vaut que dans la mesure où elle réfléchit notre destinée d'homme et nous aide à la réaliser. Tout le reste est stérile et vain, à quoi peuvent s'amuser un moment les intelligences, mais qui ne saurait les faire vivre ni les faire subsister" (Bergson, Lib. Plon, 1926, p. 242).

Bergson had correspondence with a number of Catholic writers. He wrote more than once to one of his main opponents, Joseph de Tonquédec, S.J.³, whose article, "M. Bergson, est-il moniste?" (Etudes, Feb. 1912, pp. 506-516), provoked a famous reply about Bergson's views on the nature of God (20.2.1912). Bergson received more support and sympathy from A.G. Sertillanges, O.P.⁴, to whom he wrote an appreciative letter about the article

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1. A favourite author is L. Lévy-Bruhl, the biologist.
 2. Note the references to, e.g., Molière in Le Rire and to Corot and Turner in P.M. Many novelists and poets figure among his books, as well as works on aesthetic theory.
 3. These letters appear at the end of Tonquédec's Sur la philosophie bergsonienne (Beauchesne, 1936).
 4. See Chapter Four.

"Le libre arbitre chez saint Thomas et chez Bergson" (Vie Intellectuelle, Vol. XLIX, No. 7, of 25-4-57, pp. 252-269). Bergson later met Père Sertillanges, who wrote in Avec Henri Bergson (N.R.F. Gallimard, 1941, pp. 5-6): "Une correspondance espacée, mais assez fréquente, et de longues conversations, dont la dernière remonte à quelques semaines avant sa mort, m'ont permis de connaître avec une réelle intimité les idées personnelles du grand philosophe, j'entends celles qui ne s'expriment pas dans ses livres". Bergson knew Jacques Maritain from 1914 onwards, and read some of his philosophy. He was taken aback at Maritain's virulent opposition to his ideas in La Philosophie bergsonienne (Beauchesne, 1914). Certain remarks in P.M. (e.g., p. 1420 n. 1) display his sensitivity on this score¹.

— Bergson met Maurice Blondel, the independent Catholic philosopher, at the Société française de philosophie on 1st July 1909, when they discussed the differences between the discursive and intuitive intelligence².

Another independent Catholic thinker, Blaise Romeyer³, had Bergson's Le bon sens et les études classiques published in 1947 and Bergson wrote to him after Romeyer's book, Autour du problème de la philosophie chrétienne (Archives de Phil., 1934). The letter is dated 24th March 1935 (Mélanges, p. 1507). Another letter, dated 7th August 1939 (p. 1589) concerns Romeyer's projected celebrations for Bergson's eightieth birthday. Bergson knew Edouard LeRoy personally⁴ and LeRoy is mentioned by Bergson as early as 1900 (see Mélanges, p. 418). They became acquainted at the Société de

1. Further information given in Chapter Seven.

2. Described in Mélanges, p. 796. More information in Chapter Six.

3. Details in Chapter Four.

4. See Chapter Five.

Psychologie on 2nd May 1901, when Bergson lectured on "Le parallélisme psycho-physique".

Bergson's later confidant, Jacques Chevalier, wrote to him as early as 14th March 1915 until at least 1934. Chevalier reveals in Entretiens avec Henri Bergson (Plon, 1959) information about various meetings¹.

Chevalier also published a short work entitled Bergson et le Père Pouget (Plon, 1954)², showing Bergson's friendship and respect for this Lazarist priest, of whom he said:

Il n'y avait en lui aucune étroitesse d'esprit, aucune petitesse, rien que de grand, de généreux et d'ouvert. Il avait le sens du divin: ce sens qui, par contre, manque entièrement, il semble, à Loisy³, et dont avouent manquer d'excellents catholiques (p. 190, 13.4.1933).

Joseph Lotte, the novelist, was also fortunate enough to converse and correspond with Bergson. Their letters are exchanged between 1907 and 1914. A conversation which Lotte later called Entretien was described in a letter Lotte sent to Camille Quoniam on 21st April 1911 (published in Etudes bergsoniennes VIII, P.U.F., 1968, pp. 37-41).

Lotte's friend, Charles Péguy, wrote to Bergson on numerous occasions from July 1902 until his death in 1914. This correspondence is assembled in Etudes bergsoniennes VIII by Auguste Martin. Bergson subscribed to Péguy's Cahiers de la Quinzaine between 1900 and 1914⁴.

Bergson's letters are mainly brief, explicit and courteous to the point of deference. He never engages in a prolonged dispute - whether

1. In 1917, 1923, 1932, 1933 and 1935.

2. Pouget, Guillaume, 1847-1933.

3. Considered in Chapter Five.

4. Their relationship is analyzed in detail in Chapter Nine.

philosophical, political or personal - throughout his correspondence, although he occasionally uses his influence to further someone's cause (as in the case of Jacques Chevalier's application to the Académie Française with La Notion du nécessaire chez Aristote). However, under normal circumstances, Bergson deliberately restricts himself to answering only direct questions, and that without embellishment. From his published material, we learn little about Bergson the man. It can be said, nevertheless, that Bergson was always prepared to give time to the least of his admirers or critics. But he guarded his own impartiality and independence of mind with painstaking zeal, refusing to the end to become embroiled in any partisan movement which might conflict with the objective nature of his research or compromise the integrity of his character.

Bergson's philosophy did not at once set out to be an attempt to answer those leading questions of life: "D'où venons-nous? que sommes-nous? où allons-nous?" (Op. cit.). Nevertheless, once his philosophy was launched in a positive direction, Bergson considered it his duty to resolve such issues if it were possible: "Voilà des questions vitales, devant lesquelles nous nous placerions tout de suite si nous philosophions sans passer par les systèmes" (Energie Spirituelle, p. 815). Before the foundations could be laid the accumulation of the past had to be cleared. Thus, Bergson first sharpens his blade on the 'systems' of other philosophers.

The main butt of his criticism at first is the nineteenth century positivism of A. Comte (1798-1857), H. Taine (1828-1893) and E. Renan (1823-1892). He set out to destroy two major misconceptions - that a man's actions were determined and that time could be measured quantitatively. In L'Essai he upheld the reality of a free self only after dismissing the positivist theory of the predictability of choice; then he

broached the question of an immaterial consciousness only after demolishing theories of the mind as part of the chemical composition of the brain. The positive implications of both conclusions were developed in Matière et Mémoire, where Bergson examines the relationship between mind and body and later again the wider implications of the subject are considered in E.C. - the interaction between spirit and matter in the whole of life. Finally, having established to his own satisfaction the spiritual as the principle of life and 'progress', he turned his mind to the problem of the origin and nature of that principle in Les Deux Sources.

The conclusions of each successive work were open-ended; that is to say, they naturally uncovered and brought to light new problems requiring further research and speculation. The assertion of an immaterial consciousness automatically gave rise to the question of the mind-body relationship; this in turn demanded a solution to the relations between spirit and matter in general terms and the subject of God's existence and nature arose spontaneously from that. All the separate parts of Bergson's philosophy are interrelated and connected together and each compound must be considered in the light of the whole. It is all of a piece. This inner consistency is in no way repetition: it resembles the organic growth and unfolding of a plant. The future state of affairs is never predictable or apparent at any particular point, but, as new ideas and conclusions emerge, their connection with and dependence upon the past is quite evident.

The fact that Bergson never at any time rejects his earlier discoveries is of paramount importance. He makes constant use of previous findings to support each new hypothesis and to provide a base and spring-board for new investigations. For example, the impossibility of the prediction of a free act is described in L'Essai (1889, p. 123) and yet

in the introduction to P.M. (written in 1934) the same argument holds:

Essaayez, en effet, de vous représenter aujourd'hui l'action que vous accomplirez demain, même si vous savez ce que vous allez faire. Votre imagination évoque peut-être le mouvement à exécuter; mais de ce que vous penserez et éprouverez en l'exécutant vous ne pouvez rien savoir aujourd'hui, parce que votre état d'âme comprendra demain toute la vie que vous aurez vécue jusque-là avec, en outre, ce qu'y ajoutera ce moment particulier (p. 1260-1261).

Similar arguments are also used to describe the function of the brain in Matière et Mémoire (1896, p. 180) and Les Deux Sources (1932, p. 1199). However, the unity of Bergson's philosophy is not that of a logical syllogism where the conclusion is in some sense contained within the premise: the horizons are constantly expanding and the perspective changing.

Bergson initially opposes the positivists because he regards their methodology as fixed and over-restrictive. It is they who expect to deduce a conclusion from a mathematical premise and consequently they impose rigid, abstract and artificial principles upon the flux of life. The logical rules applicable to mathematical problems are not valid in the realm of biology or even that of physics:

L'argument essentiel que je dirige contre le mécanisme en biologie est qu'il n'explique pas comment la vie déroule une histoire, c'est-à-dire une succession où il n'y a pas de répétition, où tout moment est unique et porte en lui la représentation de tout le passé (Letter to H. Höffding in Ecrits et Paroles, III, pp. 456-457).

It is in L'Essai that Bergson demonstrates how the positivism which systematizes knowledge by attributing causal relationships to all areas of life leads directly to a theory of nature as mechanism, the will as determined and the mind as the mere product of atomic inter-reactions:

A vrai dire, ce n'est pas la nécessité de fonder la science, c'est bien plutôt une erreur d'ordre psychologique qui a fait ériger ce principe abstrait de mécanique en loi

universelle (p. 102).

This leads blindly and automatically to the following conclusions:

Le déterminisme psychologique, sous sa forme la plus précise et la plus récente, implique une conception associationniste de l'esprit. On se représente l'état de conscience actuel comme nécessité par les états antérieurs (p. 103).

From its position of materialism and determinism, positivism seemed to take a stand against all forms of liberty or true creativity - in short, to any spiritual influence in life. The law of mechanism was regarded as universally applicable. The noblest elements of the human personality were attributable to blind forces and the highest aims were the inevitable effects of certain causes.

For very similar reasons Bergson took issue with Ancient Greek philosophy. He was teaching the Ancients at the Collège de France between 1898 and 1904, and devoted part of E.C. (see pp. 755-773) to a long criticism of Aristotle and Plato. For him, Greek philosophy, like positivism, is conceptual: its basic and erroneous assumption is that "il y a plus dans l'immuable que dans le mouvant, et l'on passe du stable à l'instable par une simple diminution. Or, le contraire est vrai" (P.M., pp. 1424-1425). What is not usually recognized is that Bergson's criticisms of Greek philosophy are closely allied to his criticisms of positivism, because the common Greek conception of the world is again that of an ideological system externally imposed by the mind upon reality:

Les formes, que l'esprit isole et emmagasine dans des concepts, ne sont alors que des vues prises sur la réalité changeante. Elles sont des moments cueillis le long de la durée, et, précisément parce qu'on a coupé le fil qui les reliait au temps, elles ne durent plus. Elles tendent à se confondre avec leur propre définition, c'est-à-dire avec la reconstruction artificielle et l'expression symbolique qui est leur équivalent intellectuel. Elles entrent dans l'éternité, si l'on veut; mais ce qu'elles ont d'éternel ne fait plus qu'un avec ce qu'elles ont d'irréel (E.C., p. 763).

So Greek philosophy is conceptual and posits two worlds; one of Ideas or Forms which are eternal and unchanging; and the other of time passing which fails to bear meaning or have value because of its transience. The whole impetus of Bergson's philosophy reverses this trend, viewing the world of fixed ideas as a shadow and the world of time passing as the real world. Any intellectual system is bound to be a static picture and it is from this neglect of real time in both Greek and positivist philosophy that Bergson develops his own view of time as the starting point of his whole work. A neglect of time leads to a failure to understand action, real history and the uniqueness of each occurrence, "d'où résultait que l'Action était une Contemplation affaiblie, la durée une image trompeuse et mobile de l'éternité immobile, l'Âme une chute de l'Idée" (P.M., pp. 1424-1425).

At the heart of Bergson's philosophy, then, is a new emphasis on the real world lived of necessity in time:

Or, la durée est le plus indisputable des faits pour celui qui s'est replacé en elle (Ecrits et Paroles, Vol. III, p. 456).

So much for Greek thought at present. The other influential philosophy of Bergson's own time outside positivism was Kantianism. Bergson took Kant (1724-1804) to task over the question of time as well. According to him, Kant had detached time from life, regarding it as a category imposed subjectively upon life by the observer: it was no longer considered to be part of the fabric of real existence. Bergson took up his criticism in this way:

L'erreur de Kant a été de prendre le temps pour un milieu homogène. Il ne paraît pas avoir remarqué que la durée réelle se compose de moments intérieurs les uns aux autres, et que lorsqu'elle revêt la forme d'un tout homogène, c'est qu'elle s'exprime en espace. Ainsi la distinction même qu'il établit entre l'espace et le temps revient, au fond, à confondre le temps avec l'espace, et la représentation

symbolique du moi avec le moi lui-même (Essai, p. 151).

A second aspect of Kant's philosophy to which Bergson took exception was his characterization of all human knowledge as relative rather than absolute. If, as Bergson put it, "toutes nos intuitions sont sensibles, ou, en d'autres termes, infra-intellectuelles", then one's perception will only attain phenomena, things as they appear. But if we have an intuitive faculty which is "ultra-intellectuelle", then "elle n'atteindra plus simplement le fantôme d'une insaisissable chose en soi. C'est ... dans l'absolu encore qu'elle nous introduirait" (E.C., pp. 798-799).

Apart from this last point, the misconceptions of the Ancient Greeks, the positivists and Kant himself are alike - they all finish by denying "à la durée toute action efficace" (E.C., p. 801). There is also another common factor; for Kant's philosophy, in the same way as the Greeks' and the positivists', "est imbuë, elle aussi, de la croyance à une science une et intégrale, embrassant la totalité du réel" (E.C., pp. 795-796). The same laws and principles are presumed to govern the different academic disciplines as well as the different realms of life. Bergson's first philosophical priorities are therefore to emphasize the heterogeneity of life and to separate time from the category of quantity. This is the mission of L'Essai. Only after this does Bergson attempt - through the faculty he calls 'intuition' - to reinstate absolute knowledge:

Ce fut l'analyse de la notion du temps, telle qu'elle intervient en mécanique ou en physique, qui bouleversa toutes mes idées (Mélanges, pp. 765-766. Letter to William James of 9.5.1908).

However, before examining exactly what Bergson's revelation entailed, one further observation remains regarding the positivism which Bergson had

admired in his youth¹. It is absolutely necessary to realize that he made a clear distinction (consciously or unconsciously) between the positivist method and the positivist conclusions. Bergson actually admired the positivists' caution, their persistent experimentation, their recourse to sense experience and their mistrust of the metaphysical theories implicit in the rationalist approach². In fact, Bergson based his own method on a very similar faith in empirical investigation. In 1912 he wrote:

La méthode philosophique, telle que je l'entends, est rigoureusement calquée sur l'expérience (intérieure et extérieure), et ne permet pas d'énoncer une conclusion qui dépasse de quoi que ce soit les considérations empiriques sur lesquelles elle se fonde ... je n' ... ai fait aucune place à ce qui était simplement opinion personnelle, ou conviction capable de s'objectiver par cette méthode particulière (Mélanges, p. 964, Letter to J. de Tonquédec on 20.2.1912, in Sur la philosophie bergsonienne [Beauchesne, 1936, pp. 59-60]).

What repels Bergson is the linking together of unrelated conclusions into a unified system of thought, which is then imposed on to the world; for him, the best French philosophy is:

une philosophie qui serre de près les contours de la réalité extérieure, telle que le physicien se la représente, et de très près aussi celle de la réalité intérieure, telle qu'elle apparaît au psychologue. Par là même, elle répugne le plus souvent à prendre la forme d'un système. Elle rejette aussi bien le dogmatisme à outrance que le criticisme radical; sa

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1. Spencer was "le philosophe auquel j'adhérais à peu près sans réserve" (Mélanges, Letter to W. James, 9.5.08, p. 765).
 2. Speaking of his own philosophy in Foi et Vie XIV (16.7.1911), p. 421, Bergson states that "aucune philosophie ne se tient plus près de la science; aucune n'exige du philosophe un aussi grand effort pour se mettre au courant des procédés et des applications de la méthode scientifique. Aucune, surtout, n'attache plus de valeur et n'attribue plus de certitude à la science vraie". Even in analysing mystical experience Bergson hoped that "nous ne disions rien qui ne pût être confirmé un jour par la biologie" (Les Deux Sources, p. 1193).

méthode est aussi éloignée de celle d'un Hegel que de celle d'un Kant (Mélanges, p. 1187, "La Philosophie française, 1st pub. Rev. de Paris of 15.5.1915, pp. 236-256).

The best French philosophers for Bergson are Maine de Biran (1766-1824) and Félix Ravaisson (1813-1900), both of whom employed rigorously empirical methods. The key difference between them and the positivists, however, lies in their emphasis on introspection and self-analysis as a valid part of the empirical method. Bergson said:

A Maine de Biran remonte le premier dessein de placer la philosophie à mi-chemin entre un empirisme qui ne reconnaît que des phénomènes, et un dogmatisme métaphysique qui prétend atteindre dans leur essence les choses en soi. C'est bien dans la conscience, c'est dans l'intuition approfondie et pourtant incomplète que nous avons de notre nature que Maine de Biran a cru trouver l'intermédiaire cherché entre l'être et le paraître, entre le relatif et l'absolu (Mélanges, pp. 408-409, "Compte rendu des 'Principes de Métaphysique et de Psychologie de Paul Janet'", 1897).

It is this penetration of the 'moi intime' or 'moi profond' that Bergson also attempted. On the other hand, it is largely from Claude Bernard (1813-1878) that Bergson derived the spirit of scientific experiment:

Le fait, plus ou moins clairement aperçu, suggère l'idée d'une explication; cette idée, le savant demande à l'expérience à la confirmer; mais, tout le temps que son expérience dure, il doit se tenir prêt à abandonner son hypothèse ou à la remodeler sur les faits. La recherche scientifique est donc une dialogue entre l'esprit et la nature ("La philosophie de Claude Bernard", P.M., p. 1434).

Thus, Bergson's method is twofold: it aims at certainty and at achieving factual knowledge in every area of life and is essentially experimental, while, on the other hand, it is also experiential, as Professor Henri Gouhier explains:

Il y a une réalité au moins que nous saisissons tous du dedans, par intuition et non par simple analyse. C'est notre propre personne dans son écoulement à travers le temps. C'est notre moi qui dure (Bergson et le Christ des Evangiles, Fayard, 1961, p. 40).

In the realms of physics, biology and the natural sciences, experiments lead to facts; but, in the realms of mind, the self and metaphysics, experience leads to facts:

On pourrait maintenant dire un mot de l'entreprise tentée par l'auteur de l'Evolution Créatrice pour porter la métaphysique sur le terrain de l'expérience ... La philosophie ainsi entendue est susceptible de la même précision que la science positive. Comme la science, elle pourra progresser sans cesse en ajoutant les uns aux autres des résultats une fois acquises ("La philosophie", Ecrits et Paroles, II, p. 423).

Bergson makes as little distinction as possible between 'facts' about the external world and the 'facts' of psychology. Sometimes the two areas even overlap in terms of the results achieved:

Si je pouvais arriver ... pour les problèmes de la métaphysique en général à une certitude égale ou même simplement comparable à la certitude de la proposition de Pasteur: il n'y a pas de génération spontanée, cette certitude me suffirait parfaitement ("Le parallélisme psycho-physique", Ibid., p. 146).

In Bergson's epistemological method there are two ways of knowing. One can either know internally or externally. Both methods can render absolute knowledge. The former technique is named 'intuition' and the latter 'intelligence':

Intuition et intelligence représentent deux directions opposées du travail conscient: l'intuition marche dans le sens même de la vie, l'intelligence va en sens inverse, et se trouve ainsi tout naturellement réglée sur le mouvement de la matière (E.C., p. 721).

Intelligence renders 'scientific' knowledge, which Bergson calls knowledge of matter; intuition renders 'metaphysical' knowledge, by

which Bergson means knowledge of all that is not material or mechanical - such things as 'la durée réelle', 'l'élan vital', 'le moi profond' and, finally, 'Dieu':

En principe la science positive porte sur la réalité même, pourvu qu'elle ne sorte pas de son domaine, qui est la matière inerte (E.C., pp. 670-671).

By way of contrast, "la métaphysique doit procéder par intuition ... L'intuition a pour objet la mobilité de la durée, et ... la durée est d'essence psychologique" ("Introduction à la métaphysique", P.M., p. 1416).

In L'Evolution Créatrice the two means to knowledge are at first called 'intelligence' and 'instinct'. Intelligence has developed in man, at the end of the evolutionary branch characterized by consciousness; instinct has developed best in insects and certain animals without consciousness but with adaptation to action suiting the needs of their lives. Man is significant not only as the high point of consciousness but because, through consciousness, he can rediscover the spirituality of life ('l'élan vital'):

Partout ailleurs que chez l'homme la conscience s'est vu acculer à une impasse; avec l'homme seul elle a poursuivi son chemin. L'homme continue donc indéfiniment le mouvement vital, quoiqu'il n'entraîne pas avec lui tout ce que la vie portait en elle (E.C., pp. 720-721).

It might appear that intelligence is therefore the major part of consciousness - "la conscience, chez l'homme, est surtout intelligence" (E.C., p. 721) - and is therefore the spiritual faculty par excellence. Yet, although intelligence per se is spiritual and forms part of consciousness, its main function is to 'understand' matter in terms of projected activity in the world of matter. Bergson wrote to Agnès Petit:

Je ne vais pas jusqu'à bannir l'intelligence de la métaphysique, ni à en faire dans la philosophie une source d'erreurs. Elle a sa place en philosophie et même en métaphysique, quand ce ne serait que parce que nous ne pouvons guère exprimer notre pensée sans la faire passer à travers le filtre intellectuel. D'autre part, dans le domaine de la matière, l'intelligence est capable d'atteindre l'absolu (Bergson et le Rationalisme, Fiser, Prague, 1921, quoted pp. 46-47).

The last sentence is ambiguous, however. Bergson meant by it that intelligence fully grasps external relations in material terms. He does not imply that intelligence can know things as they are in themselves, from the inside. In l'Evolution Créatrice it is crystal clear that the intelligence simply takes 'still photographs' of the external world in order to plan its future action:

La nature nous ayant destinés à utiliser et à maîtriser la matière, l'intelligence n'évolue avec facilité que dans l'espace et ne se sent à son aise que dans l'inorganisé. Originellement, elle tend à la fabrication (P.M., p. 1319).

In addition, the intelligence "nous montre, dans la faculté de comprendre, une annexe de la faculté d'agir", and can only know by 'representing' "les rapports de choses extérieures entre elles, enfin penser la matière" (both E.C., p. 489). The weakness of intelligence in l'Evolution Créatrice is manifest: it knows little about movement at first hand and it knows little of the uniqueness of each moment: it reconstructs reality according to its preconceptions and intentions.

Emotion captures and captivates the inner man, while intelligence interests itself in externals and fails to seize the movement of life, or to understand the real nature of life. Intelligence works with 'concepts' which are static representations: "Nous nous persuadons sans peine qu'en juxtaposant des concepts à des concepts nous recomposerons le tout de l'objet avec ses parties et que nous obtiendrons ... un équivalent intellectuel ...". This still-life picture is illusory

because all life has mobility¹.

It has often been assumed that Bergson is anti-intellectual in every sense of the word². This is actually untrue. Mind must be regarded as a unity of consciousness. Bergson uses the word 'intelligence' to denote a certain attitude of mind which is orientated towards action. The opposite attitude, which seeks to apprehend the movement of life, is called 'intuition'. "Il s'agit plus d'attitudes mentales que de facultés" (H. Gouhier, Bergson et le Christ des Evangiles, p. 38).

Although intelligence dominates man's consciousness normally, nevertheless intuition is always implicitly present in it: "La conscience, chez l'homme, est surtout intelligence. Elle aurait pu, elle aurait dû, semble-t-il, être aussi intuition" (E.C., p. 721). While there are two opposite directions of consciousness, they have a common home. The basic reason for the weakness of intuition is this: "Il semble qu'à conquérir la matière ... la conscience ait dû épuiser le meilleur de sa force" (E.C., pp. 721-722). In mastering the material environment, the consciousness has become almost materialized, immobilized and spatialized itself. But, wherever consciousness as freedom from matter exists, there intuition must exist as well:

L'intuition est là cependant, mais vague et surtout discontinue ... Mais elle se ranime, en somme, là où un intérêt vital est en jeu. Sur notre personnalité, sur notre liberté, sur la place que nous occupons dans l'ensemble de la nature, sur notre origine et peut-être aussi sur notre destinée, elle projette une lumière vacillante et faible (E.C., p. 722).

Intuition is one step nearer to the source of life than intelligence:

L'intuition est l'esprit même et, en un certain

1. E.C., see Essai, p. 345, Matière et Mémoire, p. 305, P.M., p. 1420.

2. For further details see Chapter Three.

sens, la vie même: l'intelligence s'y découpe par un processus imitateur de celui qui a engendré la matière (E.C., p. 722).

Intelligence is consciousness in relation to matter; it is situated between the materiality of perception and the spirituality of pure intuition. The kinship between intelligence and perception can be deduced from comments like this:

Notre perception, dont le rôle est d'éclairer nos actions, opère un sectionnement de la matière qui sera toujours trop net, toujours subordonné à des exigences pratiques ... Notre science, qui aspire à prendre la forme mathématique, accentue plus qu'il ne faut la spatialité de la matière ... (E.C., p. 670).

Intelligence is defined ultimately as "l'attention que l'esprit prête à la matière" (P.M., p. 1319).

If we reverse the normal process of intelligence which moves towards 'discourse', or articulation in material terms, we can regain pure spirituality by intuition: --

On peut donner aux choses le nom qu'on veut, et je ne vois pas grand inconvénient, je le répète, à ce que la connaissance de l'esprit par l'esprit s'appelle encore intelligence, si l'on y tient. Mais il faudra spécifier alors qu'il y a deux fonctions intellectuelles, inverses l'une de l'autre, car l'esprit ne pense l'esprit qu'en remontant la pente des habitudes contractées au contact de la matière ... (P.M., p. 1319).

Intuition is definitively described in "Introduction à la Métaphysique" as "la sympathie par laquelle on se transporte à l'intérieur d'un objet pour coïncider avec ce qu'il a d'unique et par conséquent d'inexprimable" (P.M., p. 1395). Intuition knows the absolute of 'la durée réelle', grasps absolute novelty and also seizes an integral unity. Complex unities like personality, essence or true nature, as well as individual qualities, are grasped in a single, synthetic, spiritual vision

by intuition. This is often compared to an emotional sympathy¹ and the subject of emotion becomes very important in Les Deux Sources.

The polarity between intelligence and intuition renders them almost irreconcilable in l'Evolution Créatrice (1907) and there, for the sake of impact and simplicity, Bergson makes these two attitudes of mind over-distinct. However, his writing there displays greater rigidity of mind on his part compared with both the earlier and later more flexible approaches.

In his early essay on Lucretius' poetry (1883), he conceives of the intelligence as a noble and ennobling faculty:

La science ... est l'objet même de la vie humaine, et les discordes, les guerres, les désastres publics, ne sont des maux que parce qu'ils arrachent l'intelligence à ses nobles préoccupations ... (Mélanges, p. 271).

This preoccupation must be disinterested knowledge rather than knowledge related to action alone. Shortly afterwards, in Le bon sens et les études classiques (1895), Bergson regards 'le bon sens' as a disposition of the intelligence:

Je voudrais montrer que le bon sens consiste en partie dans une disposition active de l'intelligence ... (Mélanges, p. 360).

A significant step is then taken, in the same essay, whereby Bergson envisages two types of intelligence:

L'éducation du bon sens ne consistera donc pas seulement à délivrer l'intelligence des idées toutes faites, mais à la détourner des idées trop simples, à l'arrêter sur la pente glissante des déductions et des généralisations ... (p. 370).

In Le Rire (1900), good sense, easily recognizable as a version of intuition, is called "l'effort d'un esprit qui s'adapte et se réadapte

1. See, e.g., P.M., p. 1395, E.C., p. 642.

sans cesse, changeant d'idée quand il change d'objet. C'est une mobilité de l'intelligence qui se règle sur la mobilité des choses. C'est la continuité mouvante de notre attention à la vie" (p. 475, my underlining).

In "L'Effort Intellectuel" of January 1902 (in Energie Spirituelle, pp. 930-957), Bergson says that, in the face of "un système complexe de représentations", the intelligence can take up one of two stances: "l'une de tension, l'autre de relâchement" (p. 930). The former is "une plus grande habileté à subdiviser, coordonner et enchaîner les idées ..." (p. 936), and its highest achievement is "une aptitude croissante à faire converger toutes les idées, toutes les images, tous les mots sur un seul point. Il s'agit d'obtenir la pièce unique dont tout le reste n'est que la monnaie" (p. 936). Intuition seems to be very closely connected to this manner of knowing. Of intuitive knowledge Bergson says in P.M.: "la métaphysique est donc la science qui prétend se passer de symboles" (p. 1396). But in "L'Effort Intellectuelle" it is intelligence that does without symbols or images and is 'un schéma dynamique' (p. 938). Further, 'l'intellection vraie' is capable, by itself, of realizing the reality of movement: "Elle consiste dans un mouvement de l'esprit qui va et vient entre les perceptions ou les images, d'une part, et leur signification, de l'autre" (p. 942). The 'schéma dynamique' is a unified and simple 'idea' capable of scattering itself into many images, representations and concepts. The downward movement of intelligence is therefore into symbols and material expression(s)¹:

Dans tout effort intellectuel il y a une multiplicité visible ou latente d'images qui se poussent et se pressent pour entrer dans un schéma (p. 955).

1. See Chapter Eight - section on Bergson's aesthetic theory.

Mais l'unité vers laquelle l'esprit marche alors n'est pas une unité abstraite, sèche et vide. C'est l'unité d'une 'idée directrice' commune à un grand nombre d'éléments organisés. C'est l'unité même de la vie (pp. 955-956).

In this instance we appear to be at one and the same time in the realms of intelligence and of life. But, according to L'Evolution Créatrice, intuition alone knows life! The fact is that, if the intelligence retraces its own images and material expressions to their origin, it is capable of coinciding with the preliminary intuition. Intuition and intelligence are not distinct faculties in the mind; they are the mind itself directed towards different objects.

The most fascinating aspect of this study lies in "Introduction à la Métaphysique", for Bergson originally (in 1903) used the term 'sympathie intellectuelle' (pp. 1408, 1421) as equivalent to 'intuition'. The original version later became 'sympathie' alone (1934). In the 1903 edition, an absolute could be grasped "au moyen de cette sympathie intellectuelle qu'on appelle intuition. Cela est une difficulté extrême. Il faut que l'esprit se violence" (P.M., p. 1538, italics in original). To make for specious clarity (and later confusion), Bergson simplified this in 1934 to say that the absolute is known 'intuitivement' (p. 1421). However, in both versions, this effort of mind gives "des concepts fluides, capables de suivre la réalité dans toutes ses sinuosités et de s'adopter le mouvement même de la vie intérieure des choses" (P.M., p. 1422).

What can be concluded from this study? First, that Bergson's 'conscience' was not always divided irreconcilably into two parts and, secondly, that intelligence and intuition, rather than being faculties, are attitudes of mind. Intelligence, at its lowest level, moves from concepts to general ideas; intuition usually moves from simple discoveries - individual truths about life - to concepts: "Il suit de là qu'un absolu ne

sauroit être donné que dans une intuition, tandis que tout le reste relève de l'analyse" (P.H., p. 1395). In conclusion, Bergson re-established true knowledge of absolutes by contrasting the positivist and Kantian 'intelligence' with intuition, which is really intelligence rightly used:

En critiquant, comme je l'ai fait, l'intelligence, j'ai paru prêter à un anti-intellectualisme qui n'est pas du tout mon fait, car, ainsi que vous l'avez montré, je n'ai fait que restaurer, sous le nom d'intuition, la véritable intelligence, qui n'est pas celle qui discourt mais celle qui voit (Bergson to J. Chevalier, Entretiens avec Bergson, Conversation of 3.10.1933, Plon, 1959).

It is of vital importance to understand the implications of Bergson's method with regard to the philosophy of religion. A great many areas of knowledge are now empirically analyzable and a great many thought to be entrenched in the material world have become 'metaphysical'.

The starting-point of Bergson's philosophy - the self - is itself largely immaterial, and yet it is the reality about which we can be most assured:

L'existence dont nous sommes le plus assurés et que nous connaissons le mieux est incontestablement la nôtre, car ... nous nous percevons nous-mêmes intérieurement, profondément (E.C., p. 495).

It could be objected that Bergson has made the whole of reality a purely psychological experience. Certainly, knowledge is immaterial. Bergson boldly asserts that "la vie est en réalité d'ordre psychologique" (E.C., p. 713)¹. Elsewhere, he claims that consciousness is "co-extensive à la vie" and is therefore "capable, en se retournant brusquement contre la

1. The idea is explored at length in Jeanne Delhomme's Durée et Vie dans la philosophie de Bergson (Etudes bergsoniennes II, P.U.F., 1949).

poussée vitale qu'elle sent derrière elle, d'en obtenir une vision intégrale, quoique sans doute évanouissante" (E.C., p. 492, italics in original).

Only in Les Deux Sources is Bergson's method altered somewhat, for there he not only appeals to his own experience but also to the experience of others - and a select group at that - the mystics. Nevertheless, Bergson still attempts to demonstrate the reality of God by the proof of inner experience. Professor H. Gouhier told me in Paris that he thought this was in fact a new departure but only as "une différence de technique" rather than a new method as such (Conversation of 13.12.74). It is essential to realize that Bergson did not advocate completely passive meditation as a pathway to truth. On the contrary, intelligent reasoning and intuitive grasping are complementary and both require the continuous effort of the will.

The intelligence works by arduous preparation and preliminary research: "comme toute science", by "une lente accumulation de vérités progressivement démontrées" (Mélanges, p. 375). The intelligent man did not possess great gifts at birth, except potentially. To realize this potential:

Il s'était comme ramassé en lui-même ... il avait tendu tous les ressorts de son âme, fixé sur un seul point son attention jusque-là distraite, lancé un appel à tout ce qu'il y avait en lui de puissance de vouloir et de s'émouvoir, et ... par un de ces transferts intérieurs de force ... ayant pour ainsi dire fait monter du coeur à la tête la masse d'énergie ainsi accumulée, il s'était fait ce qu'il avait voulu être, un homme intelligent. Plus puissant est cet effort de concentration, plus profonde et plus complète l'intelligence ("De l'Intelligence", Mélanges, p. 555).

Tension, attention, concentration and action are all bywords in Bergsonism and denote the involvement, not only of the will, but of the whole person in the effort to discover, uncover and know. In the realm

of 'metaphysics' the effort might be more arduous, because it is 'unnatural' and runs against the grain: the intelligence more normally reviews the past and systematically orders it. On the other hand:

Pour que notre conscience coïncidât avec quelques chose de son principe, il faudrait qu'elle se détachât du tout fait et s'attachât au se faisant. Il faudrait que, se retournant et se tordant sur elle-même, la faculté de voir ne fit plus qu'un avec l'acte de vouloir. Effort douloureux, que nous ne pouvons donner brusquement en violentant la nature, mais non pas soutenir au delà de quelques instants ... (E.C., pp. 696-697).

Furthermore, it is the movement of the will which renders distant memories present to our consciousness, and in this way the will shows itself to be a vital part of the process of self-knowledge. Its operation is variously called 'creuser' (Essai, p. 90), 'ausculter' (P.M., p. 1537, c.f. note on p. 1408), 'viser' (P.M., p. 1362) or 'pénétrer' (P.M., p. 1363).

The will, then, plays a leading role in Bergson's philosophical method. It is capable of directing the consciousness, either in concentrating on one object or in turning consciousness on to itself in order to realize one's own movement through 'la durée réelle' and take cognizance of it. What is more, the will is also capable of expressing the freedom - the spiritual nature - of the personality in overcoming unconscious or automatic action or thought (see L'Essai, pp. 108-112). However, most important of all, the will plays the paramount role in effecting an intuition, and therefore renders 'metaphysical' knowledge possible:

... si la métaphysique est possible, elle ne peut être qu'un effort pour remonter la pente naturelle du travail de la pensée, pour se placer tout de suite, par une dilatation de l'esprit, dans la chose qu'on étudie, enfin pour aller de la réalité aux concepts, et non plus des concepts à la réalité (P.M., pp. 1415-1416).

But what is this reality which Bergson calls 'metaphysical'? He himself defines it obscurely very often, as in this example: "une croissance globale et indivisée, invention graduelle, durée ..." (P.M., p. 1335). But it is this 'durée' which forms the subject-matter of the first half of L'Essai, and to understand it is crucial to an understanding of Bergson's philosophy.

Firstly, 'la durée réelle' is not homogeneous, measurable and divisible. Bergson told H. Gouhier:

Je m'aperçus, à mon grand étonnement que le temps scientifique ne dure pas, qu'il n'y aurait rien à changer à notre connaissance scientifique des choses si la totalité du réel était déployée tout d'un coup dans l'instantané, et que la science positive consiste essentiellement dans l'élimination de la durée (in Bergson et le Christ des Evangiles, p. 16).

On the positive side, in L'Essai, "la durée" appears to be "comme une multiplicité toute qualitative, une hétérogénéité absolue d'éléments qui viennent se fondre les uns dans les autres" (p. 149). At this early stage 'la durée' is already described in relation to consciousness: "la durée et le mouvement sont des synthèses mentales, et non pas des choses" (p. 80). This movement is then shown to be distinct from spatial quantity or matter, and, as a result, is termed 'spiritual': "... le changement pur, la durée réelle, est chose spirituelle ou imprégnée de spiritualité" (P.M., p. 1274).

Because the mind partakes of movement and cannot be reduced to a series of 'states' (see L'Essai, p. 130), it in turn is 'spiritual'. Thus Bergson forms a dichotomy in nature between the 'spiritual', which implies indivisible movement, and the material, which includes the brain, the external world and anything reducible to numerical quantity and extension. He examines the question of determinism and liberty from this angle:

Lors ... qu'on demande si une action future pourrait être prévue, on identifie inconsciemment le temps dont il est question dans les sciences exactes, et qui se réduit à un nombre, avec la durée réelle, dont l'apparente quantité est véritablement une qualité et qu'on ne saurait raccourcir d'un instant sans modifier la nature des faits qui la remplissent (L'Essai, p. 130).

The proof of determinism therefore rests upon a crude notion of the mind either as a collection of atoms, undergoing the same law of cause and effect (by material contact) pervading the physical Universe, or as a series of mental 'states', each bearing upon the others and all jostling for supremacy in determining the will. The first idea is dismissed peremptorily, but as to the second theory - psychological determinism - Bergson demolishes its validity by demonstrating the unity and interpenetration of all mental processes and the independence of the mind from the law of causality generally:

... la suggestion deviendrait persuasion si le moi tout entier se l'assimilait; la passion, même soudaine, ne présentait plus le même caractère fatal s'il s'y reflétait ... toute l'histoire de la personne ... C'est de l'âme toute entière, en effet, que la décision libre émane; et l'acte sera d'autant plus libre que la série dynamique à laquelle il se rattache tendra davantage à s'identifier avec le moi fondamental (L'Essai, p. 110).

In upholding the fact of free will, Bergson shows that the self is consequently spiritual. In a free act:

c'est le moi d'en bas qui remonte à la surface ... Il s'opérerait donc, dans les profondeurs de ce moi, et au-dessous de ces arguments très raisonnablement juxtaposés, un bouillonnement et par là même une tension croissante de sentiments et d'idées, non point inconscients sans doute, mais auxquels nous ne voulions pas prendre garde (L'Essai, p. 112).

The unity of the self is made even plainer in Matière et Mémoire of 1896, where the mind and memory combine to form the 'moi profond'. This self is distinct from the brain, the perception and the body:

L'erreur capitale, l'erreur qui finit par nous

masquer la connaissance du corps aussi bien que celle de l'esprit, est celle qui consiste à ne voir qu'une différence d'intensité, au lieu d'une différence de nature, entre la perception pure et le souvenir (Matière et Mémoire, p. 214).

Bergson roundly asserts a fundamental dualism in nature: "Ce livre affirme la réalité de l'esprit, la réalité de la matière ... Il est donc nettement dualiste" (p. 161). The separation is accentuated rather than diminished by an account of the relations between the two. For example, perception and habitual memory - ostensibly involved in both worlds, are rather arbitrarily placed in the bracket of 'matter': "Percevoir signifie immobiliser" (p. 342), while habit memory is "fixée dans l'organisme", and "n'est point autre chose que l'ensemble des mécanismes intelligemment montés qui assurent une réplique convenable aux diverses appellations possibles" (p. 292). On the other side, memory proper is not faded perception, because the brain cells do not preserve the past: " ... nous trouvons que le mécanisme cérébral conditionne le souvenir d'une certaine manière, mais ne suffit pas du tout à en assurer la survivance" (p. 222). Memory dominates the self as a whole and very little of the personality remains in the domain of habit and perception. Bergson goes so far as to say that perception becomes memory as soon as its action has taken place: "Votre perception, si instantanée soit-elle, consiste donc en une incalculable multitude d'éléments remémorés, et, à vrai dire, toute perception est déjà mémoire. Nous ne percevons, pratiquement, que le passé" (p. 291, italics in original).

Although Bergson does not explain exactly how material impressions are converted into 'spirit' or memory, the conclusions to emerge from Matière et Mémoire reinforce those of L'Essai. Mind, memory and personality are spiritual because they are indivisible (Matière et Mémoire, p. 305), are in flux (p. 331), and are free from the law of cause and

effect (pp. 345, 356). These three elements are united by consciousness.

In L'Evolution Créatrice Bergson examines consciousness in the widest application - its work in creation and evolution. He calls this 'l'élan vital' (p. 569 ff.) or, more frequently, simply 'la vie' (p. 489 et al.). The 'élan vital' is not an entirely new departure; it is cognate with consciousness (p. 589, c.f. "La Conscience et la Vie", Energie Spirituelle, p. 824). They both possess movement as a common factor: "Entre la mobilité et la conscience il y a un rapport évident" (E.C., p. 588). In fact, "c'est dire que l'organisme le plus humble et conscient dans la mesure où il se meut librement" (p. 589). The earlier solidarity between movement and spirituality is maintained. Whenever one looks at immobility - pure materiality - in evolution, it is clear that there the "élan vital" has spent itself: "la fixité, chez l'animal, apparaît le plus souvent comme une torpeur où l'espèce serait tombée, comme un refus d'évoluer plus loin dans un certain sens ..." (p. 588). There is, then, a similarity in all Bergson's first three works between "la durée", "la conscience" and "le mouvement". They all belong to the realm of spirit.

It is in L'Evolution Créatrice that the question of God first arises. It is clear from Bergson's earlier philosophy that 'le changement' or 'la durée réelle' is the fundamental stuff of life: "Le réel n'est que changement, autrement dit que le changement c'est la substance". Bergson boldly proceeds:

Le changement se suffit à elle-même, c'est-à-dire qu'à une chose qui est mue il n'est nul besoin d'un moteur: que dans le changement pur il y a changement sans chose qui change, sans mobile ("La perception du changement", P.M., p. 1381).

The implications of this statement for religion at first sight appear to be unpromising. If change and time are the structure of the Universe,

the 'unmoved mover' of Aristotle and Aquinas is inconceivable. If change and time need no support then they appear to have usurped the role of God in creation.

On the other hand, it is quite conceivable that God can be imagined as working in and through 'la durée réelle', and this is in fact Bergson's suggestion. But this then raises the question of God's transcendence. Can a God who only works in and through time, and, indeed, who is identified with time, stand above it in eternity or be independent of it in his actions? Bergson does not attempt to answer this question immediately, but proceeds at his own pace. He draws a primary conclusion related to this problem in L'Evolution Créatrice, which is that time ('la durée') might have a direction and therefore an intelligent source or goal, not foreseeable beforehand by intelligence, but comprehensible afterwards.

Bergson's 'finalism' sees the motion in the Universe not as a journey towards a fixed goal, but from an already existing source. This is explained in biological terms, since Bergson is careful to stay close to the evidence of life in evolution; he speaks of the eye as being drawn by the light¹. In this same way, the 'élan vital' attempts to draw life back to its source.

Mme. R-M. Mossé-Bastide suggests that this idea of soul 'falling' into bodies by some fatal attraction, and then aspiring to be pure soul again, is one of Plotinus' magisterial concepts, known as the idea of 'procession'. She adds the proviso that, with Bergson, the 'élan vital' positively attacks matter as an obstacle (see E.C., p. 578), but still aspires to be spirit again. But her general conclusion is this:

1. E.C., p. 554.

Autrement dit, Bergson accepte l'idée platonicienne d'une Ame du monde, expliquant par sa descente dans l'univers sensible, l'harmonie de l'ensemble (Bergson et Plotin, P.U.F., 1959, p. 7).

Bergson himself actually explains this doctrine of Plotinus in l'Energie Spirituelle (pp. 887-888). Mme. Mossé-Bastide sees an alternative expression of the same idea in the notion of the One becoming the many. This is to be found in Plotinus' *Vith Enneades* and its counterpart is Bergson's 'schéma dynamique' (in Energie Spirituelle, p. 946 ff). Her conclusion is that "Vie et pensée sont donc toujours, et conformément au schéma plotinien de la 'procession', un passage de l'unité à la multiplicité" (Op. cit., p. 8).

The problem, however, has been stated too much in terms of a thing which creates, remaining outside and aloof from the world, and a thing which is created: "Tout est obscur dans l'idée de création si l'on pense à des choses qui seraient créées et une chose qui crée" (E.C., p. 705). Because 'la durée réelle' is, in essence, spiritual, it is therefore of one substance with God. But more than this: matter, in Bergson's system, is spirit hardened and solidified into immobility, and not a radically different substance at all. That is why, even in materiality, the 'élan' is still present:

Ne serait-ce pas qu'au-dessous du besoin de stabilité que la vie manifeste, dans cet arrêt ou plutôt dans ce tournoisement sur place qu'est la conservation d'une espèce, il y a quelque exigence d'un mouvement en avant, un reste de poussée, un élan vital? (Les Deux Sources, p. 1069).

At this point, God appears still to be limited to 'la durée réelle' and its action, and the question as to whether there is room for a Creator outside 'la durée réelle' still remains to be answered. While accepting that time and flux are in the nature of all being, Bergson will not fall

into the trap of identifying God Himself with 'la durée', but only with its source:

Je parle de Dieu comme de la source d'où sortent, tour à tour, par un effet de sa liberté, les 'courants' ou 'élans' dont chacun formera un monde: il en reste donc distinct et ce n'est pas de lui qu'on peut dire que le plus souvent il tourne court ou qu'il soit à la merci de la matérialité qu'il a dû se donner (Reply to J. de Tonquédec, Mélanges,¹ p. 766-767)

In L'Evolution Créatrice, Bergson substantiates this point. The Creator is described as "un immense réservoir de vie", from which "doivent s'élancer sans cesse des jets, dont chacun, retombant, est un monde" (E.C., p.705). The continuation of spiritual energy in life is therefore the evolutionary process, which attempts to re-elevate matter to its source of life. Bergson is concerned with the spiritualization of all of life, not, as with Plotinus or as in Manichaeism, the separation of spirit from matter.

Another vitally important point to grasp with reference to Bergson's God is that he is not in evolution himself; the world is evolving through his action: he is seen as an absolute - not a conceptual absolute - but an absolute of life; a life of which this life is the sluggish, dilatory reflection, often inert or turgid, sometimes struggling feebly, occasionally reaching a state of activity and detachment from itself in consciousness. When 'l'élan vital' does reach a state of activity, it begins to participate in God's life. God is therefore the concentration or fullness of life, which in this world is only refracted as action, movement, creation, change and, above all, liberty. God, in L'Evolution Créatrice,

1. See Tonquédec's article, "Bergson, est-il moniste?", Etudes, Vol. 130 (1912), pp. 506-516.

is the

centre d'où les mondes jailliraient comme les fusées d'un immense bouquet - pourvu toutefois que je ne donne pas ce centre pour une chose, mais pour une continuité de jaillissement. Dieu, ainsi défini, n'a rien de tout fait; il est vie incessante, action, liberté ... (E.C., p. 706).

In general terms:

tout se passe comme si un large courant de conscience avait pénétré dans la matière ... Il a entraîné la matière à l'organisation, mais son mouvement en a été à la fois infiniment ralenti et infiniment divisé (E.C., p. 649).

The fact of God's transcendence must therefore be proved, without positing a God of entirely different substance or nature from his creation. God differs from His creation, not by substance or nature but by degree (of intensity, vigour, purity, etc.). So the absolute "se révèle très près de nous, et, dans une certaine mesure, en nous. Il est d'essence psychologique ... Il vit en nous" (E.C., p. 749). In Les Deux Sources, mystical experience is seen as "une participation de l'essence divine" (p. 1200).

If God is seen primarily as a Creator in E.C. (1905), Bergson develops his theology further in Les Deux Sources, without perceptibly changing his mind on the evolutionary process, which he summarizes in familiar terms (pp. 1069-1076) within the old framework of 'l'élan vital'. But Bergson does venture new theories on God as he is in himself, and not just in creation. The old 'durée' and 'élan vital' have now become 'l'émotion créatrice' (Les Deux Sources, p. 1056), which highlights a change of emphasis. God is personal and altruistic. Traces of 'l'élan vital' are still in evidence; e.g., "les vrais mystiques s'ouvrent simplement au flot qui les envahit" (Les Deux Sources, p. 1059), but its purpose has changed somewhat from the creation of species to "action, création, amour"

(p. 1166). The emphasis is on the latter trait. In fact, it is the burden of H. Sundén's La Théorie bergsonienne de la religion (P.U.F., 1947) to demonstrate that Bergson's God "apparaît presque comme une émotion" (p. 282). Bergson does not deny this, but, instead, expands upon it: "Création signifie, avant tout, émotion" (Les Deux Sources, p. 1013): "Il y a des émotions qui sont génératrices de pensée; et l'invention, quoique d'ordre intellectuel, peut avoir de la sensibilité par substance" (p. 1011). Nevertheless, Bergson is at pains to separate the emotion which motivates the Universe from the superficial idea of 'feelings':

Une émotion est un ébranlement affectif de l'âme,
mais autre chose est une agitation de la surface,
autre chose un soulèvement des profondeurs. Dans
le premier cas, l'effet se disperse, dans le second
il reste indivisé. Dans l'un, c'est une oscillation
des parties sans déplacement du tout; dans l'autre,
le tout est poussé en avant (p. 1025).

Love is an emotion which is "un état d'âme" (p. 1026).

Love stands in direct contrast to an intellectual sense of duty dictated by reason alone:

Autre chose est un idéal simplement présenté aux
hommes par des sages dignes d'admiration, autre
chose celui qui fut lancé à travers le monde dans
un message chargé d'amour, qui appelait l'amour
(p. 1041).

The work of God in creation is described now simply as "une entreprise de Dieu pour créer des créateurs, pour s'adjoindre des êtres dignes de son amour" (p. 1192).

God is now not restricted to the circular process of 'l'élan vital' but is attained in a simple, vertical movement: "les grands mystiques déclarent avoir le sentiment d'un courant qui irait de leur âme à Dieu et qui redescendrait de Dieu au genre humain" (p. 1020). Perhaps the clearest expression of this lies in the idea of 'un appel', which, from

the human side, appears as 'une aspiration': "l'efficacité de l'appel tient à la puissance de l'émotion qui fut jadis provoquée, qui l'est encore ou qui pouvait l'être ..." (p. 1046). This 'appel' causes man to 'briser le cercle' (p. 1038) and to take a creative 'bond en avant' (p. 1038). The circle to be broken is not only the opposition of matter, but also the circle of 'closed' morality which limits all love and aspiration to one's own interests or those of one's own group. The call of God enables men to transcend social customs and the status quo by a creative action which achieves something entirely new and unexpected. Each of these actions "fut une création, et la porte restera toujours ouverte à des créations nouvelles. Le progrès qui fut décisif pour la matière de la justice ... consista dans la substitution d'une république universelle, comprenant tous les hommes, à celle qui s'arrêtait aux frontières de la cité, et qui s'en tenait dans la cité elle-même aux hommes libres" (pp. 1039-1040).

The new departure in Les Deux Sources¹ is that God is sought and found through an attitude of generous love, and himself actively seeks men in this same way. On the other hand, 'la durée' and 'l'élan vital' penetrate all men and material things indiscriminately and indifferently. The individual becomes of pre-eminent significance in Les Deux Sources. The mystic is distinguished from other men not just in seeing more to life than the material world but also in his shunning of crass materialism; he is a man like the rest in possessing a spiritual self, but unlike them

1. Bergson rightly recognizes this as a new departure for him: "Nous dépassons ainsi, sans doute, les conclusions de l'Évolution Créatrice" (p. 1193). He explains that, at this stage, "le courant vital qui traverse la matière, et qui en est sans doute la raison d'être, nous le prenons simplement pour donné" (pp. 1193-1194).

in possessing "un supplément d'âme" (p. 1239) derived from God himself.

God is understood specifically in terms of love:

Des êtres ont été appelés à l'existence qui étaient destinés à aimer et à être aimés, l'énergie créatrice devant se définir par l'amour. Distincts de Dieu, qui est cette énergie même, ils ne pouvaient surgir que dans un univers, et c'est pourquoi l'univers a surgi (p. 1194).

So in Les Deux Sources new ideas of God establish his nature as personal, loving, transcendent and these are added to the previously established traits - creative, free and dynamic.

The exact role of Jesus Christ in the world is sidestepped by Bergson. He maintains that if the Universe "est une machine à faire des dieux" (p. 1245) then Christ can raise himself to divinity; but then so can all men:

Du point de vue d'où nous nous plaçons et d'où apparaît la divinité de tous les hommes, il importe peu que le Christ s'appelle ou ne s'appelle pas un homme ... Disons simplement que, si les grands mystiques sont bien tels que nous les avons décrits, ils se trouvent être des imitateurs et des continuateurs originaux, mais incomplets, de ce que fut complètement le Christ des Evangiles (pp. 1176-1179).

Pierre Mesnard confronts this problem in a dialogue. His 'Marcel' says:

Le Christ n'étant pas défini expressément comme Dieu, tous les attributs absolus de l'Eglise s'en trouvent ébranlés, par exemple, l'unicité de sa mission, et l'infailabilité de sa doctrine ... ("Catholicisme et bergsonisme", Revue Apologétique, May 1933, p. 554).

L'Abbé Magnin, in a discussion with Bergson on the subject of mystical experience and faith in Christ, commented:

L'aide si nécessaire à la jeune humanité est en Jésus, principe de vie offert à tous,

to which Bergson replied:

Jésus est bien, en effet, le sur-mystique, et je trouve bien belles les pages que vous venez de me lire sur l'union vitale des mystiques avec lui (Rivista de filosofia neo-scolastica, Rome, 1933, No. 1, p. 112).

Now it appears strange that Bergson can accept Jesus as a super-mystic who communicates directly with God and yet also as someone with whom other mystics communicate and think they have found God. Christ's place in creation still has to be defined. The solution of H. Gouhier is that Christ is an absolute in human terms: "Le sermon sur la montagne ouvre l'âme à l'amour sans objet: on ne saurait concevoir un au-delà du Christ dans une inversion plus totale que cela" (Op. cit., p. 166). He it is whose communion with God is complete: "l'union est totale, et par conséquent définitive" (Les Deux Sources, p. 1172).

However, Christ's position still appears relative and not an absolute; particularly when it is realized that the above quotation does not refer especially to him, but to the possibility of union for any man. Etienne Borne's fears are not easily allayed:

Qui nous dit que demain un génie religieux ne se manifestera pas porteur d'un message plus généreux et plus rayonnant? ("Spiritualité bergsonienne, spiritualité chrétienne", Etudes carmélitaines, October 1932, p. 184).

Even if Christ cannot conceivably be surpassed, why should he be a unique object of devotion for Christians and mystics? What could make him the only way to the Father (John 14, v. 6)? In what consists his special relationship with God (John 5, v. 20)? How can one know God in knowing him (John 8, v. 19)? What gives him the power to bestow life and forgive sins (John 11, v. 25; 5, v. 27)?

It might also be argued by the orthodox Catholics that Bergson emphasizes man's religious aspirations but maintains a guarded silence

about revelation and grace. Irénée Chevalier (in Ecrits et Paroles, p. 113) argues that "Bergson ne dit pas un mot de grâce". On close inspection, however, it is not this simple. Bergson often describes mystical experience in terms of God's action. For example, he "livrerait à qui saurait l'interroger le secret de la création" (p. 1174). But it must be remembered that Bergson could not have remained faithful to his own method of research had he moved from God to man; from revelation to observation; from dogma to experience; from theology to philosophy. His researches are firmly rooted in the mind's own efforts to interpret facts and experiences. His method is of necessity entirely human in orientation. He only tackles mysticism from the angle of man's search for God and experience of God. This does not mean that he rules out the possibility of God's search for man.

Even the mystic's calling is conceived only in human terms; in terms of the individual's vision, action and effect-on society:

De tout temps ont surgi des hommes exceptionnels en lesquels cette morale s'incarnait ... C'est à eux que l'on s'est toujours reporté pour avoir cette moralité complète, qu'on ferait mieux d'appeler absolue (p. 1003).

On the other hand, insofar as he takes us back to the situation of a man seeking God, not through dogma, theories or tradition, but face to face in the experiences to which all dogma and theories have recourse, Bergson did a valuable work in clearing the mind of second-hand ideas, prejudices and presuppositions.

CHAPTER THREE

BERGSON'S RECEPTION IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH BEFORE 1920

There were two points of high relief in the history of Bergson's relations with the Catholic Church: the first was on 1st June 1914, when Bergson's first three major works¹ were placed on the Papal Index of prohibited books; the second occurred on 9th September 1941, when Bergson's final testament was published in the Gazette de Lausanne, having been passed from his widow to Emmanuel Mounier, directeur of Esprit. It revealed that Bergson's adherence to the Catholic Church was far from tenuous, and, when coupled with the fact that he called a priest, C. Lelièvre, to his deathbed, stands in stark contrast to the apparent hostility between Bergson and the Catholics in 1914. The text of this testament is as follows:

Mes réflexions m'ont amené de plus en plus près du catholicisme où je vois l'achèvement complet du judaïsme. Je me serais converti si je n'avais vu se préparer depuis des années la formidable vague d'antisémitisme qui va déferler sur le monde. J'ai voulu rester parmi ceux qui seront demain des persécutés. Mais j'espère qu'un prêtre catholique voudra bien, si le cardinal-archevêque de Paris l'y autorise, venir dire des prières à mes obsèques. Au cas où cette autorisation ne serait pas accordée, il faudrait s'adresser à un rabbin mais sans lui cacher et sans cacher à personne mon adhésion morale au catholicisme, ainsi que le désir exprimé par moi d'abord d'avoir les prières d'un prêtre catholique (quoted in "Caractéristiques religieuses du spiritualisme de Bergson" by Elaise Romeyer, Bergson et le Bergsonisme, Beauchesne, 1947, p. 29).

The earlier decision over whether or not to condemn Bergson's works to the Index, which stands in stark contrast to the above testimony, was taken on 1st June 1914 by Pope Pius X and was then countersigned on the

1. L'Essai, M.M. and E.C.

3rd by Cardinal Della Volpe and Thomas Esser, O.P. (the secretary of the Commission and the Papal theologian).

After the publication of this decision in the official Vatican journal, Acta Apostolicae Sedis¹, the news was reprinted in La Semaine Religieuse de Paris of 20th June 1914 under the heading "Décret de la Sacrée Congrégation de l'Index" with the warning: "En conséquence, personne ne peut à l'avenir éditer, lire ou garder ces ouvrages sans encourir les peines édictées par l'Index" (p. 922).

What were the events leading up to this 'mise à l'Index' and which elements in Bergson's philosophy were regarded as invidious to Catholic faith and doctrine? First, it is interesting to note that, just five days after the condemnation, the journal bearing the news, La Semaine Religieuse de Paris, announced a reprinting of Albert Farges'² book, La Philosophie d'Henri Bergson, Exposé et Critique³. This provides an important clue as to the nature of adverse Catholic reactions to Bergson at the time. Mgr. Farges was an influential figure in the Church. He was present at Bergson's 'soutenance de thèse' in 1889⁴. Mgr. Farges was also a personal friend of the Cardinal d'Etat, Merry

1. Of 12th June 1914, pp. 314-315.

2. Farges, Albert, 1848-1926. Prof. at Institut Catholique, directeur of Séminaire de Saint Sulpice. He also taught in Major Seminaries at Bourges and Nantes, then directed the Séminaire Universitaire d'Angers. Other main work: La Crise de la Certitude, 1907.

3. Maison Bonne Presse, 1st edition, 1912. Chapters 1 and 9 appeared initially as articles in La Revue néo-scholastique de philosophie (Louvain), No. 19, 1912, and La Revue pratique d'Apologétique, April 1909.

4. Together with Mgr. d'Hulst, Principal of the Institut Catholique, Paris, and Félix Ravaisson, the philosopher.

Del Val¹, who himself "has been blamed for an extreme doctrinal rigorism" (The New Catholic Encyclopaedia, McGraw-Hill Co., New York, 1967, p. 693).

Merry Del Val expressed his sympathy with Farges' many criticisms of Bergson's philosophy in a letter reproduced in Foi et Vie². He delivers his approbation of Farges' viewpoint "au nom du Saint Père", and the text runs as follows:

En présence des fausses théories de cette philosophie nouvelle qui voudrait ébranler les grands principes, les vérités acquises de la philosophie traditionnelle, une voix autorisée devait s'élever pour démasquer et réfuter ces erreurs, par combattre ce venin du modernisme philosophique, d'autant plus funeste et plus dangereux qu'il est plus voilé, plus subtil et plus séduisant. C'est ce que vous venez de faire, avec toute la compétence que l'on vous connaît, dans un travail de critique sereine, impartiale et objective. Le Saint Père vous en félicite, et vous avez ainsi ajouté à la série de vos ouvrages philosophiques, une oeuvre destinée à faire du bien aux âmes, spécialement à la jeunesse, en les préservant des dangers de ces doctrines erronées, en les ramenant à la vérité et les aidant à s'orienter vers les lumières si sûres de la philosophie traditionnelle (p. 654).

From the censorious tone of this letter towards 'la philosophie nouvelle', Bonifas concludes: "C'est donc le thomisme contre le bergsonisme" (p. 655). But, in point of fact, the pro-modernist periodical, Foi et Vie, took up a faintly sympathetic stance with regard to Bergson's work, yet it was almost alone amongst Catholic publications. Bonifas began his article with these words:

Or, au moment même où il semble que le divorce

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1. Merry Del Val, Rafael, 1865-1930. Ordained 1888. Went into the papal diplomatic service as Chamberlain. From 1899 presided over Academia dei Nobili Ecclesiastici. Titular Bishop of Nicaca 1900. Made Cardinal by Pius XI in 1903. A full-length biography has been written by J.P. Abbing (Catholic Truth Society, 1937).
 2. In the article "Catholicisme et Bergsonisme" by H. Bonifas, 16.11.1914. pp. 654-656.

que nous constatons depuis longtemps entre la science et la foi, va trouver enfin une solution, une réconciliation, dans une philosophie renouvelée, et une métaphysique rajeunie, une église s'élève, par l'intermédiaire de ses prêtres exprimer ses craintes, et dans la personne de son pape arrête d'un geste hautain tout essor du système nouveau (p. 654).

However, Bonifas is careful to avoid too much controversy: "Cela dit, nous sentons très bien que c'est Mgr. Merry Del Val qui a raison" (p. 654). This sentence could well be a cover, as it is out of keeping with the other sentiments expressed in the article.

Two other articles on Bergson in Foi et Vie pursue the idea that he is effecting a happy reconciliation between science and religion. This idea of reconciliation was of the utmost significance at this time, for since the time of Darwin in the natural sciences and Comte in philosophy the champions of scientific knowledge had pointed out the severe contrast between the seemingly secure and absolute knowledge obtained by scientists and the uncertain and conflicting speculations of theologians and metaphysicians. From this idea it was a short step to presume that science could provide all necessary knowledge about life, whereas metaphysics furnished nothing of practical value or concrete certainty.

Both articles are by A. Hollard, the editor in chief: the first on L'Evolution Créatrice (16th September 1907) and the other significantly entitled "Les réalités que la science n'atteint pas" (Nos. 14 and 15 of 1911). The rapport between Bergsonism and modernism was strengthened by Foi et Vie when Bergson was invited to give a conference on "L'Ame et le Corps" on 28th April 1912. Bergson almost certainly failed to see the theological implications of this step.

Although other periodicals had covertly modernist leanings¹, these were rarely rallied to Bergson's cause. Les Annales de philosophie chrétienne, edited by Lucien Laberthonnière², actually opposed Bergson vehemently, and Maurice Blondel³, the co-editor, wrote to Laberthonnière:

En somme, il y a entre nous ... une opposition philosophique très profonde ... Car, tandis que Bergson tend à s'affranchir de l'analyse intellectuelle, toute subordonnée à des instincts utilitaires, pour se rejeter vers "la sympathie intuitive", je cherche dans l'action le prolongement naturel, l'application et l'enrichissement progressif de la pensée (Correspondance philosophique: M. Blondel, L. Laberthonnière, Ed. du Seuil, 1961, p. 192, Letter of 11.11.1905).

The Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse⁴, directed by the modernist priest, Alfred Loisy², was also indifferent to Bergson's fate, although La Revue du clergé français was more accommodating. Its editor, J. Bricout, in his article, "M. Bergson à l'Index" (15.8.1914), praises Bergson for his demolition of previous materialistic philosophies and even approves some of his positive assertions:

On doit ... reconnaître que Bergson a puissamment contribué à remettre en honneur les idées principales du spiritualisme traditionnel: il a combattu le déterminisme, l'évolutionnisme matérialiste et antifinaliste, l'idéalisme anglais, le kantisme, il a fait reprendre à la philosophie le contact avec le réel, il n'a pas craint d'invoquer en faveur du libre arbitre la preuve de l'expérience interne, il a hautement affirmé que les diverses formes de l'être

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1. The modernist movement in France is considered in relation to Bergson in Chapter Five.
 2. See Chapter Five for further information.
 3. Chapter Six is devoted to Blondel.
 4. This review was condemned by Cardinal Richard in 1907 (see Chapter Five).

ne peuvent être ramenées à la mécanique des atomes, il a proclamé la suprématie de l'homme sur le règne de l'animalité et l'existence d'un "Principe de Création" (p. 451).

However, Bricout is at pains not to appear to dispute the Pope's decision over Bergson, and concedes that "M. Bergson se trompe sur des points où la doctrine chrétienne est engagée et ... il paraît d'autant plus dangereux pour bon nombre d'esprits qu'il est mieux intentionné et plus accrédité" (p. 452). In addition, Bricout holds that the God of L'Evolution Créatrice bears little resemblance to the Christian God. It is clear that the prevailing attitude of the Catholic establishment towards modern trends in philosophy is universally condemnatory.

Another contributor to La Revue du Clergé français, E. Lenoble, takes up Bricout's last point in an article entitled "Henri Bergson: Chronique Philosophique" (January 1908). Lenoble asks himself what constitutes, for Bergson, the principle of life. - He decides that for Bergson it is 'la conscience'; not human consciousness, but a 'total' consciousness. He concludes that this is an extremely obscure idea, and so "la vérité est que Bergson nous laisse dans l'obscurité la plus grande au sujet de la nature radicale de l'être" (pp. 204-205). If, moreover, being is to be reduced to becoming or change, Bergson's "force universelle ... ne peut savoir par quelles phases elle passera, l'essence de la durée étant de créer du nouveau et de l'imprévisible" (p. 206). Lenoble concludes on an even more critical note than Bricout, maintaining that Bergson's philosophy has little validity for a Catholic, because his God is a blind force, or, at best, an incomprehensible manifestation of 'la conscience' in life.

The tone of Lenoble's second article in the same journal, on 15th March 1912, dealing with "L'Intuition philosophique", becomes even more

hostile and insensitive. This time, Lenoble takes issue with Bergson's conception of the intelligence: "Comme [Bergson] enlève à l'être la réalité, M. Bergson enlève à l'intelligence la vérité" (p. 723) and, although Lenoble recognizes that Bergson's 'intelligence' is really "un faux intellectualisme et une pseudo-analyse" (pp. 723-724), he fails to recognize the rational aspect of Bergson's 'intuition' or the fact that it is a philosophy dependent upon reflection.

Thus, by and large the journals with modernist leanings not only failed to support Bergson, but moreover tainted his philosophy with heterodoxy and heresy. Bergson's terminology was treated at face value and criticized bluntly and in a crudely simplistic way. Even the liberal periodical, La Quinzaine, which published Edouard LeRoy's¹ article, "Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?" (16.5.1905), showed no apparent interest in Bergson. Having said that, it is nevertheless true that the paper's founder and editor, Georges Fonsegrive², did later come to realize the importance of Bergson's thought in a book entitled L'Evolution des Idées dans la France contemporaine (Bloud et Gay, 1920), where he devotes a long section to him. Even here, though, the tone is far from laudatory and the insights shallow:

Le mysticisme de M. Bergson n'est qu'un mysticisme égoïste au lieu d'être un mysticisme théiste ... Il y a seulement entre M. Bergson et Plotin cette différence que le réel dont nous a parlé jusqu'ici M. Bergson n'est pas un Dieu transcendant (p. 142).

On religious matters in general Bergson is held to be highly suspect. However, Fonsegrive does manage to glimpse the significance of Bergson's

1. See Chapter Five.

2. For biography see Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journée, No. 11, 1928.

'intuition', which was to play an important part in Catholic thought later on:

l'on peut, par exemple, ne pas condamner à l'abstraction et reconnaître cependant tout ce qu'il y a de fécond dans l'intuition (p. 154).

Fonsegrive fails to elaborate much upon this and moves on to conclude somewhat sympathetically that Bergson's religious philosophy is still in an embryonic stage:

Je crois ... que sa philosophie réserve sur ce point beaucoup de surprises ... M. Bergson n'a pas encore abordé le problème moral ni le problème religieux. Dans L'Evolution Créatrice il s'est placé résolument au sein même de la nature. Il n'est pas étonnant qu'il n'y ait pas rencontré le créateur (p. 158).

As might be expected, some of the most swingeing criticisms of Bergson came from neo-Thomist philosophers. A distinction has to be made, however, between the high-Thomist school and the more independent Thomist philosophers, for, as will later be seen, some of Bergson's greatest supporters came from the ranks of the latter group. For the time being it is necessary to analyze the nature of and reasons for the opposition to Bergson among high Thomists. How had it transpired that Aquinas had come to be held in such reverence that he was then the yardstick by which all other philosophies were judged and found wanting?

From the sixteenth century St. Augustine had exerted the most considerable influence on the religious philosophies of France. The elevation of St. Thomas Aquinas was largely a nineteenth century phenomenon. The constitution of the Vatican Council which declared papal infallibility for 'ex cathedra' pronouncements on doctrine had also accepted as true Aquinas' account of the relationship between reason and faith (on 24th April 1370). Nine years later, on 4th August 1879, Leo XIII promoted Thomas to the position of official theologian of the Catholic Church

through the encyclical Aeterni Patris. Thomist studies were instituted in all seminaries and the furtherance and exposition of Thomist doctrines were encouraged among the philosophers of the Church. Pius X maintained the impetus of Thomist studies with his motu proprio named Doctoris angeli of 29th June 1914 and his Canon No. 1366 of the Code of Canon Law in praise of St. Thomas.

To promote the new learning, La Revue néo-scolastique de philosophie (Louvain) was brought into being by Mgr. Désiré Mercier in 1894, while La Revue Thomiste began in 1893 and the Jesuit periodical, Etudes, was started in 1897¹. Mgr. Mercier was appointed, in 1882, 'Professeur de philosophie selon saint Thomas' at the University of Louvain². In 1889 he founded the Institut Supérieur de Philosophie at the same University, which considerably expanded the scope and influence of Thomist studies.

Mercier's influence as a Thomist scholar was paramount at the turn of the century. He had written three major works on Thomas doctrines³. Not only did Mercier write on Thomas, but he inevitably cast a certain interpretation on Thomist doctrine, dwelling particularly on Thomas's idea of the supremacy of the intelligence in the human personality. Intelligence, for Mercier, vouchsafed the objectivity of knowledge through the faculties of abstraction and judgement. The only means of certain knowledge was through abstraction from sense data and a subsequent

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1. Other neo-scholastic periodicals of this time include Annales de Philosophie chrétienne (1830 onwards), Revue de Philosophie (1900) and the Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques (Kain, Belgium, 1907).
 2. In time the Louvain school of neo-Thomism became heavily influenced by Kantian thought.
 3. La théorie de connaissance certaine (1885), Du fondement de la certitude (1889) and La théorie générale de la certitude (1899, 1900 and 1966) (All Peeters, Louvain and Alcan, Paris).

validation of the resultant concepts by analytical logic. As to sense experience, this was regarded with a certain suspicion, as G. Van Riet explains: "Mgr. Mercier n'est jamais parvenue à légitimer les jugements d'expérience, aussi les passe-t-il aisément sous silence" (L'Epistémologie Thomiste, Bibliothèque Philosophique de Louvain, 1946, p. 146). On the other hand:

c'est de Kleutgen que [Mercier] apprit à ... subordonner toute certitude, même celle des faits internes et externes, à la certitude proprement intellectuelle des vérités analytiques. Comme ses contemporains de Rome, les professeurs de l'Université grégorienne, Mgr. Mercier s'orientait donc, semble-t-il vers une conception abstraite de l'évidence; comme eux, il prenait la science aristotélicienne pour le type de la connaissance certaine (p. 140).

This contrasts starkly with Bergson's diametrically opposed conclusions, discussed earlier, that experience of self and of the world alone give certain knowledge, whilst the intelligence abstracts itself from the reality of movement and time passing. Obviously, any neo-Thomist taking his lead from Mercier's interpretation would find himself automatically opposed to Bergson on two counts: first, Bergson's conclusions about the world and about God were bound to be based on sense experience - dubious evidence at best for them; and, second, Bergson's critique of the intelligence undermined the very faculty a high Thomist regarded as alone capable of making objectively true judgements. As Van Riet emphasizes; for Mercier, "la certitude relève du seul jugement intellectuel" (p. 158), whereas "il n'y a pas de certitude d'expérience, distincte de la certitude d'évidence qui caractérise les jugements idéaux ... ou bien ^[le jugement] est intellectuel; sa contradictoire est alors manifestement impossible" (p. 161, italics in original). Sense perception only intervenes in this system as an instrumental cause for the acquisition of

concepts; only a subsequent analysis of these concepts and their logical relations can give rise to a true judgement as to their nature.

The primacy of intellect over will and over sense perception was also upheld in the argument about faith and reason at this time. The objects of faith were ultimately available and conformable to reason. Roger Aubert argues that this is the case for St. Thomas but that, whereas in St. Thomas the intelligence is placed in possession of supernatural principles, even so the kind of knowledge attained by intelligence of itself is only "comme une première ébauche de la vision béatifique" (Le problème de l'Acte de Foi, Warny (Louvain), 3rd ed., 1958, p. 47). For St. Thomas, the limits and weakness of the intelligence were ever-present to his mind as a reminder of man's fallen state. Thomas's argument can be seen as a compromise, too, for certain pre-conditions must be present in the attainment of knowledge; a modicum of faith, the assent of the will and the right guidance of the discursive intellect. Augustine's maxim, 'Credo ut intelligam', is never contradicted. Knowledge is a concordance where all things work together for good: "La foi, assentiment au vrai, est formellement un acte d'intelligence. Mais ceci maintenu, il reconnaît par contre à la volonté une part aussi large et aussi intrinsèque que possible: non seulement l'amour enveloppe du dehors l'adhésion du croyant pour la rendre méritoire ... mais cette adhésion elle-même est oeuvre d'amour"¹ (Aubert, p. 54).

The equilibrium of such a delicate balance proved to be easy to upset. Pius IX's encyclical Qui Pluribus (9th November 1846) tended

1. E.g., see De Veritate, q. 14 a.1.: "Et sic etiam movemur ad credendum dictis in quantum nobis reponitur, si crediderimus, praemium vitae aeternae; et hoc praemo movetur volutes ad assentiendum his quae dicuntur quamvis intellectus non movetur per aliquid intelligum".

to stress the role of reason to the detriment of the will - a measure to counteract the effect of rationalist scepticism over reason's power to grasp metaphysical truths.

The 'high' neo-Thomist interpretation of this in 1896 is represented well by M-B. Schwalm¹, who argued (in "L'Acte de Foi est-il raisonnable?", Revue Thomiste, 1896, Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 36-63) that "L'acte de Foi procède de la raison spéculative" (p. 38). He is obviously opposed to the notion of 'blind faith'. However, to avoid overstepping himself, he makes the condition that the attainments of the intellect do not extend to "la notion positive de l'Absolu (de Dieu), l'aspect original et propre de sa Déité" (p. 47), whereas the intelligence can discover signs and pointers to God: "Il y a les signes sensibles d'une gravitation universelle qui emporte toute nature au-dessus d'elle-même .". (p. 47). Schwalm's target for attack is here 'idealism', considered as stemming from Kant². In the category of 'Kantian' he wrongly places Blondel and all "methods of immanence" which, according to him, deny to reason the possibility of demonstrating God's existence³. This approach to methods and doctrines of immanence set a precedent for other Catholics in responding to Bergson's philosophy.

Thus, the Church needed to defend the rights and capacities of the unaided intellect first against Kant and 'idealism', and also the scientific positivists, who used intelligence to demonstrate the 'unreasonable' nature

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1. Schwalm, Salvador, 1860-1908, entered Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs 15.9.1879 under name Marie-Benoît. Contributed various articles to Science Sociale as well as the Revue Thomiste. See A. Gardeil - Le Père Schwalm (1911).
 2. See "Les illusions de l'idéalisme et leurs dangers pour la foi" (Revue Thomiste, Vol. IV, No. 2, 1896, pp. 413-441).
 3. Blondel's method 'détruit, par une notion faussée de l'immanence, toute possibilité d'arriver au vrai' (p. 423).

of faith and offered alternative explanations of the Universe which excluded or disregarded all supernatural explanations. So it was that any attack on the intelligence was often conceived inside the Church as an attack on the possibility of metaphysical knowledge. And, therefore, Bergson's attack on the 'positivist' conception of intelligence was construed by some as an attack on the intelligence as such.

The years 1908-1909 marked the zenith of Bergson's influence and popularity. By 1911, W.H. Helm in The Daily News (30th October) described Bergson's lectures on 'La Nature de l'Âme' at London University as "a philosophic furore". At the Collège de France in the period immediately after the publication of L'Evolution Créatrice (1907) Bergson's lecture hall was filled an hour before he arrived (see L.P. Quint, "Bergson et Proust" in Bergson, Essais et Témoignages, p. 358). 700 people turned up in a room seating 375 (see M. Barthélémy-Madaule's Bergson, Ed. du Seuil, 1967, p. 21). The Tharaud brothers situated the upsurge in popularity slightly earlier:

On ne sait trop pourquoi, aux environs de 1905, la philosophie des Données immédiates de la conscience était devenue à la mode dans les salons parisiens. Avec étonnement, M. Leroy-Beaulieu, célèbre économiste, qui faisait ses leçons dans la même salle que M. Bergson et immédiatement avant lui, voyait son amphithéâtre, ordinairement presque vide, se peupler par miracle d'une foule inattendue ... (Notre cher Péguy, Plon, Vol. I, 1926, p. 263).

The intensification of the Catholic attack on Bergson coincided with this upsurge in popularity. Albert Leclère¹, following up his researches

1. Author of Essai critique sur le droit d'affirmer (1901) and Le mysticisme catholique et l'âme de Dante (1906).

on neo-Kantianism in the Church, published Pragmatisme, modernisme, protestantisme (Bloud et Cie., 1909), a section of which (pp. 63-79) was devoted to Bergson, viewing him as the culmination point of neo-Kantianism. C. Coignet also bore out this point of view in his De Kant à Bergson (Alcan, 1911). Léon Cristiani¹ published Le problème de Dieu et le pragmatisme in 1909 (Bloud et Cie.). The link with pragmatism was possibly started in the United States, where the philosophy of W. James was associated with Bergson's. G. Sauvage wrote of The new philosophy in France in The Catholic University Bulletin in April 1906 (Vol. XII, No. 2) in pragmatist terms:

In a word, for the primacy of thought, (Bergson's philosophy) aims to substitute the primacy of life and action ... Reasoning cannot embrace the richness of reality nor the fullness of life (pp. 148-149).

Bergson's critique of the intelligence is called a "criticism and not refutation; for the new philosophy a system is not refuted, but outgrown" (p. 149).

And Albert Leclère regards Bergson as Kantian since:

depuis Kant, la tendance la plus originale de la philosophie moderne est celle qui travaille à établir le primat de la raison pratique sur la raison théorique, à extorquer à la première, en tout ou en partie, ce qu'on désespère de conquérir en se servant de la seconde (Op. cit., p. 5).

He is also so enamoured with the idea of Bergson as a pragmatist that he blandly states that, "le chef d'oeuvre métaphysique du pragmatisme est, sans hésitation possible, la philosophie de M. Henri Bergson, bien qu'encore inachevée" (p. 63). Both Kant and Bergson, he argues, grant

1. (1875-1951), ordained 1902. Studied for doctorate in Rome. Professor of History, Facultés Catholiques, Lyon; then Doyen, Faculté des Lettres until retirement in 1949.

mere "relativité de la connaissance au sujet" (p. 68, n. 1). The absurdity of such a parti-pris lies in the fact that it ignores Bergson's intuition, which renders both absolute and metaphysical knowledge. Furthermore, Bergson opposed Kant on the very grounds that Kant makes all knowledge relative and subjective¹. Leclère's point of emphasizing Bergson's 'pragmatism' completely fails to understand the nature of his metaphysical theories. For Leclère, these metaphysical arguments are negligible besides the 'pragmatic' ones: "La théorie bergsonienne de la science est la seule qui soit pleinement pragmatiste, en dépit de sa carence métaphysique; elle l'est avec plus de rigueur que les théories anglo-américaines similaires"(p. 68). Yet, as already seen, Bergson's 'carence métaphysique' constitutes a major part of his philosophy.

All of Leclère's conclusions about Bergson's philosophy are vitiated by this identification with Kant. If Bergson is a Kantian philosopher, then he must support Kant's theory of mind:

bien vite on nous avertit que tout ce que l'esprit ajoute au donné brut qui vient battre le rivage de la conscience est l'oeuvre de celle-ci, un ensemble d'artifices inventés et disposés par l'esprit dans le but de penser l'univers (p. 68).

According to this logic, if Bergson is an 'empiricist' and 'pragmatist' he must also be a 'materialist' and 'positivist':

Le pragmatisme bergsonien, le plus parfait de tous, est identiquement une philosophie de l'immanence. Immanente à la pensée est la science du monde phénoménal, faite exclusivement ou à peu près pour l'action matérielle ... Dieu est dans le monde, la pensée n'est que dans le monde, et toute l'oeuvre de la pensée, la scientifique, qui est artificielle, et l'autre, qui atteint l'absolu, s'origine en nous, demeure en nous qui plongeons dans un monde dont la source et la fin sont en lui-même (pp. 75-76).

1. See Chapter Two.

Leclère appears to be guilty of exactly that mistaken use of the intellect which Bergson attacks, for he approaches Bergson with prejudices and preconceptions, determined to align Bergsonism with past concepts and previous systems. He becomes incapable of understanding Bergson as an opponent of Kant and the positivists.

Georges Dumesnil¹, in La Sophistique contemporaine (Beauchesne, 1912), similarly considers Bergson as a Kantian phenomenalist (see p. 41) and once again he slides down the slope of 'immanentism' via 'subjectivism' to 'materialism', placing Bergson in the camp of which he is the greatest enemy:

Bergson, arrivant à la zone de l'entendement en voyant l'imperfection, redescend au-dessous, replonge dans la vie indistincte. En s'arrêtant court devant l'entendement, il s'est coupé la route vers la vie supérieure de la raison humaine et toutes les formes en nous de la vie divine (p. 34).

The confusion of Bergsonism with Kant and pragmatism persists in others' works published at the time - notably Léon Cristiani's Le problème de Dieu et le pragmatisme (Bloud et Cie., 1908) and René Berthelot's Un romantisme utilitaire: Le pragmatisme chez Bergson (Alcan, 1913)².

Cristiani, while making a sensible distinction between French and Anglo-Saxon pragmatism, and while grasping that Bergson posits absolute knowledge³,

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1. G. Dumesnil (1855-1916), Prof. at Lycées Henri IV and S. Louis, Paris. Chargé de Cours in Faculté des Lettres at Toulouse, then Prof. Faculté des Lettres at Grenoble. Founded the Amitié de France 1906 (-1914).
 2. This is Volume 2 of a work called Un romantisme utilitaire. Etude sur le mouvement pragmatiste (1911-1922). The third volume is, interestingly, called Le pragmatisme religieux chez William James et chez les catholiques modernistes.
 3. "Tandis que W. James et Schiller ... concluent que le critérium de toute vérité est l'utilité pratique, H. Bergson regarde au contraire la tendance à l'action comme la source de toutes les illusions de la pensée spéculative, et la base de tout relativisme" (pp. 7-8).

nevertheless interprets Bergson's critique of 'intelligence' as an assault upon the Thomist doctrine of the intelligibility of the faith and its objects. He also tends to align Bergsonism with Kant once more.

Berthelot's work is reviewed in La Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Etranger, No. 77, 1914 (pp. 624-634) by Lionel Dauriac, who comments as follows:

M. Berthelot aurait pu faire dater le romantisme philosophique du moment où, avec le noumène de Kant, l'agnosticisme pénètre dans la philosophie. Kant porte le dernier coup à la philosophie des idées claires. En ce sens il continue Leibniz. M. René Berthelot préfère dériver sinon le bergsonisme, du moins ce qu'on pourrait lui proposer de nommer la 'mentalité bergsonienne', d'une disposition d'esprit en son fond identique à Schelling (p. 624).

Whether Kant or Schelling is regarded as Bergson's mentor, it is strange that the differences between Bergson and other philosophers are not highlighted. The supposed rapprochement between Kant and Bergson may be acceptable insofar as they were both interested in the problem of knowledge and the relationship between space, time and the external world, but their conclusions are in no way alike. Bergson wrote to the same L. Dauriac, and, after politely accepting a degree of similarity between Kant's and his own preoccupations, he drew attention to the fundamental discrepancies:

Quant au rapprochement avec Kant, il s'accorde avec un vague sentiment que j'ai toujours eu moi-même d'une parenté entre le second chapitre de mes Données Immédiates et l'Esthétique transcendentale; je crois cependant que ce que j'appelle intuition est toute autre chose que l'intuition kantienne, même lorsqu'il s'agit de 'l'intuition de la durée'. D'autre part, Kant met le Temps et l'Espace sur la même ligne, et considère comme évident que tout ce qu'on dira de l'Espace s'applique aussi bien au Temps ou vice versa ... J'estime que c'est là une illusion, née de ce qu'on substitue le temps spatialisé au Temps réel ... (Mélanges, p. 968, letter dated 26.5.1912).

The differences between Bergson and Kant are by no means elusive.

Bergson attacks Kant by name on many occasions¹. Bergson and Kant can only really be compared in terms of their disparity. Bergson rejects Kant's spatial concept of time, his limitation of knowledge to phenomenal knowledge, his disbelief in free action and his belief in the unity and all-embracing nature of science. Given this, it seems incomprehensible that Bergson could be viewed as a disciple of Kant, and yet this idea was widespread before 1920. Various neo-Thomist philosophers accepted the idea without question and were consequently placed in an anomalous position, attributing to Bergson all the 'defects' of Kant².

In turning to R. Garrigou-Lagrange, J. de Tonquédec, J. Maritain and A. Farges, we join the mainstream of neo-Thomist thought at this time. The extent to which Bergson is identified with other 'modern errors' and 'misguided' philosophies is quite remarkable. Garrigou-Lagrange shows an inveterate tendency to superficial classification. In his book, Le Sens Commun, La philosophie de l'Être et les formules dogmatiques (Beauchesne, 1909), Bergson's philosophy is not only described as 'kantien' and 'phénoménaliste' (pp. 19-20), but is variously labelled 'évolutionniste' (p. 13 ff), 'pragmatiste' (p. 19 et al.), 'nominaliste' (p. 19), 'moderniste' (p. 222) and 'néo-positiviste' (p. 149). These terms are all the more reprehensible for their spurious inaccuracy and lack of justification. Père de Tonquédec is similarly liberal with his philosophical étiquettes. In his estimation, Bergson is a 'moderniste' (Sur la philosophie bergsonienne, Beauchesne, 1936, p. 12) and a 'moniste' (p. 51), while this philosophy is one of 'immanence'

1. Notably in L'Essai, pp. 62-63, 153 in M.M., p. 351, n. 2, 358 and in E.C., pp. 795-802.

2. The fear of and distaste for Kant's philosophy among some Catholics and flirtation with his ideas and techniques among others is perhaps comparable with the ambivalent present-day Catholic attitude towards Marxism.

(p. 52) and amounts to a new spiritualism (p. 138). What both critics are agreed upon is that Bergson presents a formidable opposition to Thomist philosophy. Tonquédec puts the case like this:

La scolastique n'est-elle pas l'usage le plus conséquent et le plus intrépide de cette intelligence spéculative, dont M. Bergson a tant médité? N'est-elle pas la croyance robuste aux substances et aux essences déterminées que le philosophe nous montre dissoutes dans la fluidité du devenir? (in article: "Bergsonisme et scolastique", Revue critique des idées et des livres, 25.12.1913 [pp. 651-670], p. 652).

Garrigou-Lagrange¹ seems determined to purge from the purity of Thomas's philosophy all taint of Bergsonism; so much so that he equates Bergson's philosophy with the heresy denounced in the 26th proposition of the anti-modernist encyclical, Lamentabili (of 3rd July 1907), which runs as follows: "Dogmata fidei retienda sunt tantummodo juxta sensum pratican, id est tanquam norma praeceptiva agendi, non vero tanquam norma credendi" (quoted in Le Sens Commun, p. 17, n. 2). From this standpoint, Garrigou-Lagrange proceeds to review all the aspects of Bergsonism he considers to be damaging to Thomist doctrine. He singles out the 'nominalism' implicit in both LeRoy's and Bergson's work for especial blame. By this he means a denial of absolute knowledge or existence outside the subject's awareness:

Ce nominalisme, qui réduit en fin de compte la connaissance intellectuelle à la connaissance sensible, doit aboutir fatalement à la négation de la valeur ontologique des dogmes, autant et plus que le conceptualisme kantien (p. 19).

The basic injustice of such an assessment of Bergson is fully borne out in Garrigou-Lagrange's ensuing logic; for he next sees a necessary connection between nominalism and crass materialism and goes on to accuse

1. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., 1877-1964. Studied under Ambroise Gardeil at Saulchoir, Belgium. Taught theology at Angelic College, Rome.

Bergson of this further heresy:

Le nominalisme bergsonien n'est seulement la négation de la raison qu'il subordonne à la conscience; il paraît être aussi la négation de cette conscience qui se subordonnerait à son tour à la vie animale et végétative; tout se ramènerait à la biologie (p. 63).

And yet the whole motivation and impetus of Bergson's philosophy is anti-materialist. Perhaps Garrigou-Lagrange is here following the technique used in Lamentabili¹, which similarly sees logical connections between all kinds of theories and modes of thought from 'pragmatism' to 'agnosticism'; from 'protestantism' to 'atheism'. Lamentabili also makes a target of general movements rather than analysing single ideas in detail.

However, it is Garrigou-Lagrange's main contention that Bergson refutes the intelligibility of the external world by reducing Being to Becoming. For him, this is tantamount to reducing Being to non-being. The fundamental law of the real is 'le principe d'identité' (p. 151), which states that a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time. If, then, in Bergson's system, "rien n'est, tout devient" (p. 152), then being is non-existent: "nier que l'être qui est, sans être par soi, ait une raison d'être (ce qu'il faut pour être), c'est l'identifier avec ce qui n'est pas: nier qu'il ait une raison d'être extrinsèque, c'est l'identifier avec ce qui est par soi" (p. 177). The logic here is difficult to grasp, but, with regard to Bergson, one could counter that 'devenir' in this sense does not mean the same as 'to come into existence' or to 'bring into existence', but simply 'to change'. In Bergson's world

1. He may have been involved in writing this, but it is virtually impossible to prove it.

there is no such thing as non-being¹.

Garrigou-Lagrange derides 'intuition' as 'des jeux d'enfants' (p. 129). Its role in synthesizing instinct and intelligence is ignored. The Bergsonian 'intelligence' is also written off insensitively as 'sensualiste' (p. 44). The senses are likened to Bergson's intelligence in their function: "les sens ne voyaient que des éléments matériels", whereas "l'idée montre quelque chose d'immatériel" (p. 46). Just how intelligence differs from sense perception does not arise and the relations between intelligence as a part of consciousness and sense objects as part of the material world are also not discussed.

Garrigou-Lagrange lastly arrives at a consideration of Bergson's 'God'. Since he is identified exactly with 'L'élan vital', and is involved in the world of time passing, Garrigou-Lagrange decides that Bergson takes

le premier pas vers le panthéisme: Dieu ne peut exister que s'il crée, il ne se distingue pas de la création elle-même. Non seulement Dieu ne se conçoit plus sans le monde, mais il est absorbé par le monde (p. 232).

At this point it would be wise to draw attention to the rapprochement between neo-Thomist writers - who are not always in harmony - over Bergson's belittling of the functions and capacities of the intelligence. It is around this issue above all that the criticisms of Joseph de Tonquédec revolve. Tonquédec, S.J. (1868-1961), holds that Bergson's consciousness is of one substance with the material world and is seen as an attribute of or effluence from it. For Tonquédec, St. Thomas's 'intelligence' is the faculty which stands above or apart from the material Universe and judges of it: "Ce que notre raison postule au delà de l'univers expérimental,

1. See the argument in E.C., pp. 728-747.

pour le trouver intelligible, doit être nécessairement d'une autre nature que cet univers" (p. 28) ("Comment interpréter l'ordre du monde", written in 1908, in Sur la philosophie bergsonienne, p. 28).

If one admits and recognizes that "la conscience n'est pas un attribut des choses, mais qu'elle réside au delà d'elles et à leur source, tout gagne en clarté et en cohérence" (p. 27).

This point is hard to appreciate, for to make the intelligence separate from other living matter seems odd to begin with, but to leave obscure and unexplained its links with the rest of life - as well as its origin and nature - does little to clarify anything. Nevertheless, because Bergson's 'intelligence' is presumed to have a biological origin, Tonquédec can only understand his philosophy as 'monism'; that is, as reducing all things in life to a single principle:

Dans le monde actuel, les formes variées de la vie n'empêchent pas l'unité de l'élan vital. La création nous l'avons lu, n'est, dans son essence, qu'accroissement ("M. Bergson est-il moniste?", Etudes, Vol. 130, 1912, [pp. 506-516], p. 512).

What Tonquédec deduces from the fact that spiritual and material life have a common source is that, consequently, God cannot transcend his own creation:

L'élan vital ... n'est qu'un nom collectif pour signifier les jets qu'il forme sans cesse de sa propre substance. Telle était mon exégèse. Elle amenait la pensée de M. Bergson à une conclusion moniste. Une autre interprétation est-elle possible? (p. 51).

But this form of argument is one-sided; for it could well be maintained that the whole of life has a spiritual source and that spirit transcends the material through its liberty and consciousness. This is in fact Bergson's conclusion in L'Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience.

On the other hand, Tonquédec did question Bergson directly on 12th May 1908 on this question of God's transcendence, realizing that the question is in fact left unresolved in L'Evolution Créatrice. The reply he received has now become famous. Bergson stated that his establishment of liberty and free will as facts led naturally to

... l'idée d'un Dieu créateur et libre, générateur à la fois de la matière et de la vie, et dont l'effort de création se continue, du côté de la vie, par l'évolution des espèces et par la constitution des personnalités humaines. De tout cela se dégage, par conséquent, la réfutation du monisme et du panthéisme en général (quoted p. 60).

If it is granted that Bergson's protestations on this matter are accepted by Tonquédec, then the one serious disagreement between them concerns the powers of the intelligence. Tonquédec does take up this point before 1920, as already seen, but he mounts his most concentrated attack in "La Clef des Deux Sources" in Etudes of 5th and 20th December 1932 (articles later included in his book). He holds that

toute philosophie qui détrône l'intelligence aboutit à introniser à sa place quelque autre activité ou à la noyer dans un bloc d'activités étrangères, déclarées ses égales. Les facultés sensibles, en particulier, trouvent là l'occasion de regagner un rang dont la suprématie de l'intelligence les déboutait (Sur la philosophie bergsonienne, p. 126).

Any denial or denigration of the intelligence, according to Tonquédec, brings in its train the "despotisme du caprice individuel" (p. 129).

In Bergson's case, he adds, the senses are given free reign to determine what is true, because

ce qui déborde le cerveau ... ce sont surtout les images, les images de la rêverie et du rêve: ce peuvent être parfois des perceptions sensibles qui 'passent en contrebande', quand les mécanismes inhibitifs fonctionnent mal (p. 127).

If it is the images of memory and mind which determine the reality of a spiritual life - images derived from prior sense perception - then, Tonquédec

persists, this reverses Thomas Aquinas' proof of the spirit in man, as, in his case,

ce qui faisait ... la preuve de la spiritualité, c'était l'opération intellectuelle qui, dans le concept ou l'inférence, aboutit à produire de l'immatériel pur ... (p. 128, italics in original).

Tonquédec's greater contemporary, Jacques Maritain, realized that Bergson's philosophy represented a clean break with the past. He recognized that Bergson's attack on the positivists, the Kantian and on Ancient philosophy was more than just a verbal dissociation. He applauded the success of Bergson's venture as a victory in terms of superior logic:

M. Bergson a l'immense mérite d'avoir lutté seul (seul dans l'Université) pendant longtemps, contre le matérialisme soi-disant positif et contre le relativisme kantien qui se partageaient le monde officiel ... (p. 98).

Maritain rejoiced that Bergson had defeated his opposition on their own ground.

And yet Maritain's criticism of Bergson was virulent, even though he represented Bergson's philosophy far more fairly and accurately than most. He was not attacking Garrigou-Lagrange's man of straw. In his clear-headed way he saw the two pre-eminent aspects of the new philosophy as the replacement of Being with time and movement, and the replacement of St. Thomas's abstractive intelligence with an 'intuition' of an empirical nature. According to Maritain, Bergson "interdit à l'intelligence la connaissance de notre réalité foncière, connaissance intuitive de l'existence, connaissance rationnelle de notre moi" (pp. 129-130). For Maritain, neither the 'intelligence' nor the 'intuition' of Bergson went far enough to attain metaphysical knowledge - that is, knowledge of essence. Maritain explains that such knowledge is necessarily an intellectual intuition, which works

en tirant du singulier ... l'universel qui y existait en puissance, et qui n'existera à part, en acte, que dans l'esprit où il est connu immatériellement (p. 166).

Maritain's criticism was more complex than most, as he brought to bear a more detailed employment of Thomas Aquinas' categories and concepts than most other critics. He distinguished his own idea of intuition, which is intellectual, from Bergson's intuition, whose scope was restricted to knowledge of sense objects.

For Maritain, the proper object of intelligence is Being, while for Bergson it is practical action: "l'intelligence n'a pas pu s'adapter à notre pratique, elle ne peut s'adapter qu'à l'être" (p. 140). The further consequences of this are examined in Chapter Seven.

Bergson also confused "le flux du temps et la durée des substances" (p. 293); his 'being' or 'substance' is "comme un résidu transitoire du devenir et de l'action ..." (Intro., p. LV). This idea that time ('la durée') is substance vitiates metaphysical research, because

si la science des phénomènes enveloppe et dissimule elle-même dans son ordre propre et dans son objet formel une étoffe métaphysique, cette étoffe ne peut être que le temps (p. LV).

For Maritain, knowledge of God and of the world of spirit is extra-temporal knowledge; it is essentially knowledge of eternity:

Le temps va de sa propre pente vers la dissolution, non vers l'invention, et tout progrès est, métaphysiquement, un effort de redressement contre le temps (p. LXXVII).

Thus, true spirituality or knowledge of God

n'est pas à chercher dans le temps - ni dans l'instant. ni dans le flux, ni dans la concentration du temps - mais dans l'intemporel ... (p. LXXXV).

Maritain is Bergson's most formidable opponent in the Catholic Church, partly because he had an intimate understanding of and certain sympathy with Bergson's positions, and, second, because he dealt with each point individually and in detail. He refused constantly to categorize and generalize and some of his own positions are well thought out and are genuinely and directly matched to Bergson's arguments and sometimes arise from consideration of those very arguments.

The two major points of Maritain's criticism are echoed by Albert Farges, who sees the central idea in Bergson's cosmology as "fondée sur ce principe qui 'place l'essence du réel dans la fluidité meme' ..." ("La cosmologie de Bergson", Revue du clergé français, Vol. LXXVIII, 15.3.1913 [pp. 740-741], p. 740). Bergson's work, once again, is seen as a contrast to and contradiction of St. Thomas's philosophy: "Saint Thomas avait déjà, après Aristote et Platon, appelé cette doctrine une philosophie du non-être ..." (p. 740). Which doctrine is envisaged? For Farges, it is that in which "le devenir est la seule réalité", and where "le plus sort du moins, le tout sort du néant, l'être est une abstraction, l'être infini est le plus vide de toutes les abstractions..." (p. 740). Farges imagines that Bergson's God resembles that of Renan, for, in both instances, "Dieu est en train de se faire; il est la catégorie de l'idéal" (p. 741).

Farges, like Maritain, takes the other major idea in Bergson's philosophy to be a new conception of the intelligence. This, in his eyes, constitutes an anti-intellectualism:

Que deviendrait le dogme de l'existence d'un Dieu personnel dans un système anti-intellectualiste qui a commencé par ruiner, avec la notion d'être, la notion meme de Vérité, et qui n'admet plus aucun principe éternel et nécessaire, pas même le principe de contradiction? (p. 741).

Farges shows his acquaintance with Maritain's critique throughout in particular by quoting from an article¹:

nous concluons avec M. Maritain: 'Une philosophie qui blasphème l'intelligence ne sera jamais catholique' (p. 741).

However, unlike Maritain, Farges does not cast away from Bergson the taint of Kant or of positivism. Farges not only adopts Maritain's criticisms; he adopts many others as well. Those features of Catholic criticism which Maritain rejects or ignores Farges exploits to the full: especially the association of Bergson with Kant and other philosophers², and the attribution to Bergson of false doctrines such as 'monism' (La philosophie de M. Bergson, p. 468) and 'pantheism' (p. 471).

It is to be borne in mind that this book of Farges received the official approval of Merry Del Val, Archbishop of Paris, and of the Pope himself (see earlier). Yet Farges, in this same book, shows an extreme hostility to Bergson's work verging on fanaticism.

Something else to emerge from Farges' book is that Farges' admiration for Thomas Aquinas goes hand in hand with an admiration for Aristotle:

Pour nous et tous les disciples d'Aristote et de Saint Thomas, l'esprit philosophique prend son point de départ dans les données positives de la science expérimentale et fait effort pour la continuer et l'approfondir en l'universalisant (p. 474).

The assumption that Aristotle is the greatest influence on Thomas is common

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1. "L'Evolutionnisme bergsonien" (Revue de Philosophie, September-October 1911).
 2. e.g., "M. Bergson restait encore, en secret, le prisonnier de Kant, puisqu'il aboutit, comme Kant, quoique par d'autres voies, à la négation de la valeur métaphysique de l'intelligence humaine. Pour lui, comme pour Kant, la critique de la Raison pure est définitive" (La Philosophie de M. Bergson, Librairie Berche et Tralin, 1912, p. 480).

to all the Thomists we have so far discussed but, in Farges' book, Bergson is sometimes compared, not with Thomas's adaptations of Aristotle, but with Aristotle himself; as though Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle are interchangeable:

Aristote ... distingue d'abord le mouvement du mobile ou du sujet en mouvement: substance et accident. Puis, dans le mouvement, qui est un passage de la puissance à l'acte, il distingue aussitôt deux états opposés de la réalité: l'état potentiel et l'état actuel: clé de voute de toute sa métaphysique (p. 467).

It is Aristotle who disproves Bergson's identification of movement and substance; it is he who gives a true account of the relation between matter and spirit. In addition, Aristotle moves towards a pluralistic understanding of the Universe, while Bergson "s'oriente vers le monisme universel où l'unité ne se fait que par l'identification et la confusion des parties ..." (p. 468).

Yet, even though this attitude appears to have been acceptable in official circles, it is by no means soundly based. By 1920 the Aristotelian interpretation of Thomas was being questioned by a few men. For instance, Jacques Chevalier wrote an open letter to the editor of Les Lettres on 1st April 1920, in which he criticized Maritain's assertions about Aristotle as against Bergson:

M. Maritain affirme qu'Aristote a cru en la création et en l'immortalité personnelle. Malheureusement, son affirmation est beaucoup plus tranchante que ses preuves ... Or, quoi qu'en dise M. Maritain, il faut bien reconnaître qu'Aristote n'a pas soupçonné la notion, même rationnelle, de création, c'est-à-dire de dépendance totale du monde à l'égard de Dieu. Les textes sont là, irréfutables ... (p. 89).

Furthermore, Chevalier agreed with Bergson that,

en fait, l'idée de création est absolument étrangère à la mentalité grecque: elle est toute entière d'origine judéo-chrétienne ... (p. 90).

Maritain does contest this point of view and argues that Aristotle did not rule out the possibility of personal immortality or of creation in time (pp. 94-98). He behaves as though it were St. Thomas under attack and not Aristotle. Garrigou-Lagrange also gives as much credence to Aristotle as to St. Thomas in the work mentioned (e.g., pp. 144, 159, 160). One cannot doubt that Aristotle was seen as Thomas's mentor. He is consequently invested with as much authority as Thomas himself. This very fact provides a further good reason why Bergson was so misunderstood and so maligned, for Bergson's own reaction against Aristotle is trenchant and clear-cut¹. In brief, Bergson saw Aristotle's God as an intellectual construction - the idea of ideas - and as a fixed immobility incapable of action in the world. Yet certain neo-Thomists, as E. Gilson makes clear², confronted Bergson with just such a conception:

Tels qu'ils le concevaient, Dieu n'avait pas
l'immutabilité dynamique d'un acte d'être,
mais celle, toute statique, d'une essence dont
la perfection consiste seulement à rester
éternellement ce qu'elle est (p. 168).

The whole notion of St. Thomas as confirmer and supporter of the theses of Aristotle is ill-conceived. Thomas in no way merely paraphrased Aristotle, nor was Aristotle the only great influence on Thomas. It must be realized that, although St. Thomas adopted Aristotelianism as an instrument for the expression of his system, he was no blind disciple of the Philosopher. It is now known that he also had access to neo-platonism through Boethius, Proclus, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, Maximus, John Scotus Erigena and the Greek Fathers. In straightforward theology he is keen to accord with the findings of Augustine. In his book

1. See Bergson's criticisms of Aristotle in E.C., pp. 761-769.

2. In Le philosophe et la théologie, A. Fayard, 1960.

Aquinas (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1955, p. 83), F. Coplston makes the point that Aquinas, "while retaining the Aristotelean analyses of substance and accident, form and matter, act and potency, placed the emphasis in his metaphysics, not on 'essence', on what a thing is, but on existence, considered as the act of existing".

The beginnings of a changing attitude towards Thomas Aquinas coincide with the beginnings of a new appreciation of Bergson, and with more detailed study of Bergson's 'intuition'. Two important works in this respect were Joseph Segond's¹ L'Intuition bergsonienne (Alcan, 1913) and T.-L. Pénido's² La Méthode Intuitive de M. Bergson (Atar, Geneva, 1918)³. Owing to the detail of the analysis and the profundity of thought, the conclusions of both men are less superficial than in many other cases. J. Segond recognizes that Bergson uses intuition in order to complement intelligence rather than to oppose it. Without intuition, intelligence lacks something vital: "L'intelligence nous est apparue ... comme une sorte d'intuition solidifiée et sans mémoire de la durée qui se matérialise" (p. 116). Nevertheless, conversely, intelligence is equally vital to intuition - it collates and orders the material of an intuition: therefore, Segond goes on, "nous ne saurions formuler entre le bergsonisme et l'intellectualisme une opposition radicale" (p. 116). Segond sees affinities

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1. Prof. de Philosophie, University of Lyon. In 1929 succeeded Blondel at Aix-en-Provence. Works on Racine, Descartes and Spinoza. Also La Prière (1911), L'Imagination (1922).
 2. Pénido, T.-L. (O.P.). Professeur de Philosophie at University of Freiburg, Switzerland, 1929-1938. Published in Bibliothèque Thomiste. Major works: Le rôle de l'analogie en théologie dogmatique (Vrin, 1931), La Conscience Religieuse (Téqui, 1937), Dieu dans le bergsonisme (Desclée 1936).
 3. There was also a work by the biographer and philosopher, René Gillouin, La Philosophie de M. Henri Bergson (Grasset, 1911), which tentatively suggests that intuition could be viewed as a function of intelligence (p. 33) but the argument is not sympathetic even so.

between Bergson and M. Blondel (pp. 125 ff.) rather than between Bergson and William James.

Pénido equivocates over the value of Bergson's 'intuition', drawing attention to certain inconsistencies in Bergson's explanation of it, mainly arising from the vagueness of his metaphors and images:

Tantôt (l'intuition) semble être introspection, tantôt effort de volonté, d'imagination ou de réflexion; ailleurs c'est une sympathie intellectuelle, une inspiration ou bien encore un sentiment. Parfois, elle se fait très humble: simplement 'perception élargie' ... Soudain, prise d'orgueil, elle devient l'apanage d'une élite d'artistes ... C'est chose tout à fait ésotérique ... (p. 119).

Yet Pénido ascribes overwhelming importance to intuition in Bergson's system: "De l'intuition dépend la vie même du bergsonisme ..." (p. 120).

Pénido discusses intuition in terms of perception¹, introspection², sympathetic effort (p. 160), and, finally, in terms of thought in general.

He concludes, after St. Thomas, that essence (immateriality) alone is

grasped by the mind, and intellectually at that: "Sans le concours de l'intelligence, l'intuition est impossible" (p. 176). However, Pénido

does realize that Bergson's major intuitions are an apprehension "toute trempée de dialectique" (p. 184), and he acknowledges the importance of

positive data in Bergson's system: "M. Bergson insiste beaucoup sur

l'absolue insuffisance d'une métaphysique dépourvue de bases scientifiques" (p. 184). He takes these facts into account and finally arrives at the then

radical view that 'intelligence' may have a dual function:

A côté du morcellement pratique attribué aux sens par les bergsoniens, on reconnaît cependant l'existence d'une perception esthétique: pourquoi

1. "Vue directe, immédiate et absolue d'une réalité concrète" (p. 124).

2. Intuition is: "une perception intérieure" (p. 136).

refuser à l'intelligence un double rôle, un double usage, pratique et désintéressé ... (p. 210).

Without writing direct criticisms of Bergson's work, other men quietly assimilated and incorporated Bergson's doctrines into their own body of ideas and in this way began to introduce certain key bergsonian themes and ideas into common currency through their own personal writings.

Charles Péguy's work is examined in detail later, but his philosophical output was very much an adaptation of Bergson's ideas to social, political and theological questions, as well as to purely philosophical ones. His treatises on Bergson come nearest to a direct appraisal in the form of articles in 1914: the Note sur H. Bergson et la philosophie bergsonienne¹ (Cahiers de la Quinzaine, Série XV, Cahier 8) and the Note Conjointe sur H. Descartes et la philosophie cartésienne (1st pub. Gallimard, 1935). The Note Conjointe was written directly after Bergson's works had been placed on the Index.

Péguy defends Bergson against 'intellectualists' who underplay the role of the emotions and will in understanding life. He then reinstates Bergson's philosophy as 'intellectual' in a wider sense: "il y a un intellectualisme du pathétique, ou de tous les autres" (Oeuvres, II, p. 1314). Péguy opposes the intellectualism which places ideas in categories only in association with other ideas. For him, Bergson rediscovers the true intellect that probes and unearths new ideas.

Péguy rages at the inappropriateness of much neo-Thomist criticism of Bergson: "Tout ce qui sera perdu par Bergson sera non pas gagné par

1. A short version of this article first appeared in La Grande Revue on 25th March 1914 (No. 84).

saint Thomas mais regagné par Spencer" (II, p. 1538). Above all, Bergson is the man who recreated and reintroduced spiritual values into life: thus, Péguy is indignant that "l'homme qui a réintroduit la vie spirituelle dans le monde ait contre lui, et à ce point, les politiciens de la vie spirituelle, voilà ce que je nomme un retournement et une gageure, et un scandale voulu et une bataille à l'envers" (II, p. 1409). Gratitude is entirely absent from Catholic reactions, Péguy rails. Bergson "a contre lui ceux qu'il a perdus. Et il a contre lui ceux qu'il a sauvés" (II, p. 1409).

Péguy's article then leads on to a whole theological system based around Bergson's ideas of 'le tout fait' and the 'se faisant'¹. Its impetus comes from the conviction that Bergson "nous fait littéralement retrouver le point de chrétienté, le point de vue et le point d'être de chrétienté" (II, p. 1520). Péguy's defence of Bergson was therefore in the manner of a crusade and logic is less in evidence than sincerity and ardour.

Pierre Rousselot², on the other hand, managed to combine a lucid and cogent account of St. Thomas's views on 'intelligence' with certain modern - and especially bergsonian - theories about intelligence and intuition. Without being so bold as to proffer approbation of Bergson's teaching, he gives tacit approval by making extensive use of Bergson's discoveries in his own work.

1. Discussed later.

2. Rousselot, Pierre (1878-1915). October 1895 joined Jesuit Order. 1908 priest at Theological College at Hastings, England. Doctoral theses 1908 - the work mentioned and Pour l'Histoire du problème de l'amour au moyen âge (Munster, 1908; Vrin, 1933). 1909 entered Institut Catholique, Paris, as suppléant to Professor of dogmatic theology. Acceded to the chair 1910. Sabbatical year 1912-1913. Killed in action at Eparges, 25.4.1915.

Rousselot makes two dramatic innovations: first, he separates Thomas's 'intelligence' into two parts - 'ratio' and 'intellectus'; the former is discursive and organizing and works on material already given; the latter is an immediate apprehension of objects external to itself. Secondly, Rousselot envisages 'intellectus' as an organ of 'vision' or perception, rather than simply of abstraction. He writes of St. Thomas that:

plusieurs de ceux qui vinrent après lui comprenant mal la notion de 'saisie' et de possession intellectuelle, négligèrent l'essentielle différence de l'intuition et du discours (L'Intellectualisme de saint Thomas, Beauchesne, 1924 [1st ed. Alcan, 1908], p. 32).

This separation is derived from Platonic teaching and not from Aristotle¹.

Rousselot explains 'ratio' by reference to Bergson's 'thèse maîtresse' that "l'intelligence, essentiellement, déforme et mutile l'être qu'elle soit sens de l'irréel" (Intro., p. V). He calls this "une idée aujourd'hui si commune qu'elle a passé dans la littérature courante et dans la conversation" (Id.).

Rousselot rarely mentions Bergson by name, but he often uses very similar vocabulary and ideas. Here is an example from his article, "Les Yeux de la Foi" (Recherches de Sciences Religieuses, May-June 1910, No. 3, pp. 241-259); which encountered much opposition in Catholic

1. See p. 56 of this work.

circles¹:

Je puis avoir lu Hamlet dix fois, et n'avoir pas compris Hamlet. Je reprends le livre et voici qu'un mot ... suscite en moi, tout d'un coup, l'intuition du caractère comme d'un ensemble intelligible, d'une réalité qui se tient (p. 253).

It is hard to believe that Rousselot is not thinking of this passage in "Introduction à la Métaphysique" (P.M., p. 1394):

Le romancier pourra multiplier les traits de caractère, faire parler et agir son héros autant qu'il lui plaira: tout cela ne vaudra pas le sentiment simple et indivisible que j'éprouverais si je coïncidais un instant avec le personnage lui-même. Alors, comme de la source, me paraîtraient couler naturellement les actions, les gestes et les paroles ... Le personnage me serait donné tout d'un coup dans son intégralité ...

Another passage drawn from this article puts the question of direct influence from Bergson beyond doubt. This concerns the free act, which Rousselot describes as, not merely "la décision prise, mais la décision qui se prend" (Recherches ..., July-August 1910 [pp. 444-475], p. 449), and he elaborates:

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1. See, e.g., the following articles: M. Ligeard, "La crédibilité de la révélation" (Revue des sciences religieuses, 1914, pp. 40-57) and S. Harent, "Foi" in the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, Vol. VI, Col. 260-275. Certain of Rousselot's ideas were condemned ('tuto doceri non potest') by a Congregation in Rome in August 1920 and were forbidden to be promulgated in Jesuit theological colleges. The information was communicated by Père Ledóchowski, General of the Jesuit Order. Rousselot's article "Intellectualisme" in the Dictionnaire Apologétique also met with difficulties and H. De Lubac maintains that it was "quelque peu mutilé par les censeurs" (Blondel - Teilhard de Chardin - Correspondance, Beauchesne, 1965, p. 51, No. 6). There is an article on Rousselot in the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique XIV, Col. 134-138, by J. Lebreton and the whole volume of Revue des Sciences religieuses of 1965 is dedicated to a 'Memorial Pierre Rousselot' on the 50th anniversary of his death. Rousselot had been first secretary of this review. A. Valensin intended to publish Rousselot's collected works, but the project has not been realized.

C'est là l'histoire de nos actes libres: le 'jugement pratique' et 'L'élection volontaire', distincts pour la raison réfléchissante, mais fondus dans un même éclair de la durée réelle, s'y causent réciproquement: chacun d'eux suscite l'autre comme condition de sa réalisation (p. 449, my underlining).

Neither in these two articles nor in his book does Rousselot allude to Bergson by name. However, in an article called "Métaphysique thomiste et critique de la connaissance" in La Revue néo-scholastique, No. 17, 1910 (pp. 476-509), he mentions both Bergson and LeRoy (pp. 476, 490-491). More surprisingly, in the face of all contemporary opinion, Rousselot detects a parallelism between Bergson's and St. Thomas's 'critique de la connaissance' (p. 476) on the following grounds:

La philosophie nouvelle est donc, avant tout, une critique de la catégorie de la chose: tous les représentants s'appliquent, avec plus ou moins d'ingéniosité, de mesure et de bonheur, à en faire ressortir l'utilitarisme, l'anthropomorphisme, la relativité. - Or, la critique de la connaissance que St. Thomas a esquissée... est, elle aussi, avant tout, une critique de la catégorie de la chose, en prenant le terme chose exactement dans le même sens. Pour le saint Docteur, non seulement l'objet propre et proportionné de notre intellection terrestre est la 'chose' matérielle, mais encore l'idée primordiale d''être concret'; ... nous sommes incapables d'envisager directement ces êtres, et ... nous ne les connaissons qu'en les figurant à l'image de ces choses matérielles que nous concevons ici-bas (p. 477, italics in original).

The intellect, according to Rousselot, is a spiritual capacity in man which seizes the spiritual essence of life. This can only be represented in the mind in terms of material images or concepts:

l'intelligence est le sens du divin, parce qu'elle est capable d'êtreindre Dieu en cette sorte; et pour s'en faire une idée correcte, il faut comprendre que son rôle est de capter les êtres, non de fabriquer des concepts ou d'ajuster des énoncés (L'Intellectualisme de St. Thomas, 2, p. XI).

Owing to its fatal propensity to revert to material forms, the intelligence in man is an inaccurate and feeble spiritual gift which is, nevertheless, truly angelic and only realized by angels in its fullness. The spiritualized intellect is also one with the nature of God: "la dernière perfection de la vie appartient à Dieu, en qui comprendre, c'est être, si bien que l'idée de Dieu, c'est l'essence divine elle-même ..." (p. 10). Clearly, it can be deduced from this that mind is spiritual and as such partakes of Godhead, just as in Bergson's philosophy 'la durée réelle' and 'la mémoire pure' are similarly of one substance with 'l'élan vital'.

Rousselot further distinguishes the two functions of intelligence by reference to their abilities. The 'ratio' manipulates matter and verbalizes (materializes) ideas, and, above all, immobilizes real existence:

Abstraire, c'est mépriser le fluent et postuler la permanence; c'est donc, cristalliser ce qui se répand, concentrer le diffus, glacer ce qui coule, c'est solidifier (p. VI).

The 'intellectus', by way of contrast, is capable of 'intuition'. This word, absent from St. Thomas, must have been borrowed from Bergson, who brought it into philosophical usage at the time. Intuition is the condensation of many ideas in a single sensation or perception. Intuition does not thereby generalize or categorize; it reduces to a concentrated unity:

L'universalité plus grande des formes idéales, par où connaissent les Anges supérieurs, au lieu d'amener l'indistinction et le vague, est condition de pénétration plus subtile dans l'originalité des êtres. Elle est, disions-nous, non pas généralisation, mais condensation ... (p. 18).

Rousselot's intuition is further described as being analogous to eyes and feet: "l'intelligence est de soi analogue, non seulement aux

yeux des êtres corporels, mais, si l'on peut dire, aux organes de préhension, mains, pattes, tentacules ..." (p. 24). This tallies with Bergson's metaphors like 'saisir' (E.C., p. 646), 's'insérer' (P.M., p. 1393) and 'posséder' (P.M., p. 1401). The correspondence of vocabulary is even more marked in Rousselot's description of intuition as total union:

le nom d'intellection peut sembler bien terrestre et bien pâle; vision qui est métaphorique, a trouvé généralement plus de faveur. Mais le mot est sans importance: qu'on dise union, possession intime, coïncidence consciente ... le point capital est que, pour St. Thomas, la faculté qui nous fait capables de cette action transcendante, est identiquement celle qui, selon un autre mode d'agir, forme nos concepts et combine nos déductions d'ici-bas (pp. 36-37, italics in original).

This seems to be exactly what Bergson suggests in "L'Introduction à la Métaphysique" (written 1903)¹. He additionally talks of intuition as perception (P.M., pp. 1399-1400), as 'sympathie intellectuelle' (P.M., p. 1537, p. 1395) and as 'coïncidence' (P.M., p. 1401).

Whereas 'intellectus' and 'ratio' belong to the same faculty, this faculty is not entirely distinct from the will. Where true knowledge is gained, love and obedience are involved:

l'obéissance, oeuvre propre d'amour, ne pourra tendre qu'à l'intellection. L'acte de s'unir, dans tous les sens, sera connaître (p. 51).

Thus, in Rousselot's, as in Bergson's, system, the concept is a material substitute for a pure idea. However, for Rousselot, the human intelligence is only capable of knowing the essence of sensible things

1. To gain 'intuition', "il faut procéder ... à un renversement du travail habituel de l'intelligence. Penser consiste ordinairement à aller des concepts aux choses, et non pas des choses aux concepts" (P.M., p. 1403).

(see p. 79) and is incapable of knowing the particular in its existence. Things are not known in themselves but as they appear to the senses and mind:

notre intelligence, quand elle veut signifier quelque être comme subsistant, le signifie comme concrétisé; quand elle veut signifier un être simple, elle ne le signifie pas comme un être, mais comme une détermination ou manière d'être ... (pp. 84-85).

This is in contradistinction to Bergson, for whom the visible or intelligible attributes of a thing are that thing in itself and undistorted.

For this reason, Bergson's intuition attains absolute knowledge¹.

Rousselot hesitates over this point, for, while recognizing that St.

Thomas adamantly refused "une valeur intellectuelle ... à ce que (l'homme) atteint uniquement par ses facultés sensibles, c'est-à-dire au singulier

matériel", Rousselot himself considers that "on peut, enfin, rechercher jusque dans ses apports du sensible dont finalement l'intellect est juge,

tout ce qui peut aider à la représentation et à l'évaluation de ce qui est" (pp. 110-111). This, Rousselot contends, is the solution St. Thomas should have adopted.

M.D. Roland-Gosselin², O.P., also evinces great interest in Bergson's 'intuitive' faculty in "L'Intuition bergsonienne et l'intelligence" (Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques, 1913). Having distinguished Bergson's intuition from perception and from instinct, he likens it to aesthetic understanding (see p. 394). However, he is not happy with the

1. In "Introduction à la Métaphysique" (P.M., p. 1424): "la connaissance intuitive ... s'installe dans le mouvant et adopte la vie même des choses. Cette intuition atteint un absolu".

2. Rolland-Gosselin, M.D. (O.P.), 1883-1934. 1908-1927 taught at Saulchoir, Belgium. Translated De Ente et essentia (with intro.) by Thomas Aquinas. Wrote Essai d'une étude critique de la connaissance (1932).

restrictions aesthetic intuition places upon intuition as a whole, and is consequently compelled to attempt a reintegration of intuition and intelligence:

M. Bergson, en effet, pour donner quelque consistance à son intuition, tente de réintégrer en elle l'intelligence qu'il semblait avoir à jamais exclue de toute connaissance spéculative (p. 396).

Roland-Gosselin, as a Thomist, does not admit the possibility of an intuition of a specific thing in its concrete existence, but he cautiously countenances the possibility of a direct intuition of the self - 'le moi qui dure' (p. 403). He excludes intelligence from this type of intuition, because Bergson seems to imply this:

Ces descriptions extérieures vous laissent certainement entrevoir que, dans l'intention de M. Bergson, l'intuition immédiate du moi en sa mobilité et sa durée originelle, n'est pas oeuvre de l'intelligence (p. 404).

Roland-Gosselin remains rather sceptical of the validity of Bergson's 'intuition' overall. For one thing, his inability to reconcile intuition with intelligence "rend impossible l'acte de foi qu'il nous demande" (pp. 410-411). However, essentially, Roland-Gosselin returns a verdict of not proven on Bergson's intuition with the corollary that Bergson's abortive effort "aura tout au plus ce résultat de persuader aux philosophes qu'ils acceptent avec plus de sang-froid les limites de notre pensée ..." (p. 411). Of the Dominicans, P. Roland-Gosselin is perhaps the most sympathetic to Bergson but in general their stance is a hostile one. Writers whose main work and influence came after 1920, such as Joseph Maréchal and Edouard LeRoy, are considered later, but it is true to say that at this early stage, in general, the Catholic debate about Bergson centred upon the neo-Thomist writers. The argument then and later was fought out not between Thomists and Bergsonians but between Thomists of

different dispositions. Tonquédec and Garrigou-Lagrange represent one school of thought; Rousselot and Roland-Gosselin another, with various parties in between. The widening rift between these schools becomes accentuated and intensified after 1920 and the initiative gradually moves towards the more liberal wing.

With reference to the question of knowledge, it can be categorically asserted from this study that the controversy primarily revolves around Bergson's division of mind into two distinct functions, 'intelligence' and 'intuition' - the abstractive, discursive process as opposed to the perceiving and apprehending process. The influence of the article "Introduction à la métaphysique" cannot be overestimated. Rousselot boldly aligned these faculties with Aquinas's 'ratio' and 'intelligence' and, apart from creating a new focal point for the debate, he raised from obscurity and misunderstanding an important aspect of Aquinas's epistemology.

It also needs to be pointed out that Bergson's opponents in the Church gave an exaggerated degree of attention to the imagery and symbolism of L'Evolution Créatrice, implying that this power of artistic vision must preclude a power of systematic, abstract reasoning in Bergson. In addition, the originality of the thought in this work was largely missed and was certainly not taken in the context of Bergson's other works, and so L'Evolution Créatrice also gave rise to misinterpretations and fanciful conclusions. Again, Rousselot, by demonstrating the effectiveness of detailed analysis and by studying closely the earlier works, made discoveries of usefulness and inspiration. These had the weight of evidence behind them and in time made a greater contribution to Catholic thought than any number of generalized and insensitive attacks on Bergson.

CHAPTER FOUR

BERGSON'S INFLUENCE ON CATHOLIC THOUGHT, 1920-1939

It was clear by 1920 that the ideal of a fixed Thomist orthodoxy was quite elusive. Such men as Mgr. Mercier (Professor of Thomist Philosophy at Louvain from 1882), R. Garrigou-Lagrange and J. de Tonquédec had all tried to find dogmatic statements capable of giving final definition to their quest for proof of the Catholic faith in logical and rational arguments. They wanted a faith not only based on reason but one which could be shown to be demonstrably and undeniably true. Bergson's philosophy presented an immediate challenge to this approach, not because it undermined the possibility of achieving absolute knowledge, but because it attacked the notion that this knowledge could be found through discursive theories. Such theories could never adequately describe or explain experience; the inner witness alone could give validity to experience:

Les philosophes s'accordent ... à distinguer deux manières profondément différentes de connaître une chose. La première implique qu'on tourne autour de cette chose; la seconde entre en elle ... De la première connaissance on dira qu'elle s'arrête au relatif; de la seconde ... qu'elle atteint l'absolu (P.M., p. 1393).

Bergson calls the first type of knowledge "analyse", whereby something looks different from different external points of view and can be described and interpreted in any number of ways. The second type he calls "intuition", whereby one "sympathise avec les états et ... je m'insère en eux par un effort d'imagination" (Id.). The obvious problem with this route towards certainty is that it makes certainty a subjective conviction and not an objective 'fact', as the high Thomists would have preferred.

Bergson was not of course the only, nor even the major, influence on Catholic thought at this time, which was eager for intellectual respectability among professional philosophers. The German idealists were greatly admired by Blondel and his disciples, Kant was respected by J. Maréchal and the Louvain school and there was a growing movement of Augustinian thought, represented by such as Blaise Romeyer and A.C. Sertillanges. Most Catholics nominally gave precedence to St. Thomas Aquinas, but his standing was no longer unchallenged or unique, and, more important, various new interpretations of Aquinas's thought were emerging from the time of Rousselot onwards. After 1920 it was the spirit rather than the letter of Aquinas's writings which was sought after. The Catholic philosophers who emulated Aquinas's own spirit of free and eclectic scholarship inevitably knew and read Bergson's work (as will be seen), for he was the leading French philosopher of the age, and, moreover, his writings had spearheaded the revival of the 'spiritualist' movement in philosophy. Both Bergson and the Catholics had a common enemy in positivism and materialism. Thus, as Etienne Gilson said: "Si l'on examine de près la carrière intellectuelle de ceux qui contribuèrent à cette renaissance du thomisme authentique, on constatera qu'il n'en est pas un qui, à un moment ou un autre, n'ait subi l'influence de Bergson" (Le Philosophe et la Théologie, p. 174).

In this chapter the changes in neo-Thomist thought will be examined through the work of a few leading Thomists and then the more liberal and independent Catholic thinkers will be considered inasfar as they adapted Bergson's teachings to their own ends.

It is important to note just how much the interests of Catholic philosophers of this period do converge - around the question of 'intuition'

in epistemology¹, and around the relationship between reason and faith². A concentration on these subjects (and particularly the former) is not myopic or unjustified therefore, and relates directly to Bergson's own philosophical preoccupations. In following the main themes I will endeavour to draw attention to the individual contributions of various philosophers.

According to Thomist orthodoxy before 1920, the intelligence is above all an abstracting faculty and not a perceiving faculty. Certainty about the objects of perception comes only after intellectual judgement on the content of the 'intellectual intuition'. This means that for such Thomists "il n'y a pas de certitude d'expérience distincte de la certitude d'évidence qui caractérise les jugements idéaux ..." (L'Epistémologie Thomiste, G. Van Riet, p. 161). If the intellect only grasps abstracts, then facts of experience - that is, contact with things in their individuality and temporal existence - are outside one's knowledge.

This doctrine, propounded by Mercier, was initially accepted and adopted by men like J. Maritain, Mgr. L. Noël (at Louvain)³ and Maurice d'Hulst (at the Institut Catholique) and even Etienne Gilson. All of these thinkers later found such a doctrine too narrow and rigid an explanation of all sense experience. The change came when various philosophers independently realized that the word 'intuition' could be applied to a variety of different

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1. See G. Van Riet's L'Epistémologie Thomiste (Bib. Phil. de Louvain, 1946) and also J.-H. Nicolas' article, "Le problème de l'intuition intellectuelle tient dans la philosophie moderne une place primordiale" (Revue Thomiste, No. 1, 1947, p. 113).
 2. This is the main subject of Roger Aubert's book, Le problème de l'Acte de Foi (E. Warry, Louvain, 3rd ed., 1958). To some extent he looks into Bergson's influence. Many intellectual Catholics wanted to keep their faith by demonstrating its rationality and reasonableness.
 3. President of the Institut Supérieur from 1878.

experiences and that the consciousness received knowledge in various ways according to the object of knowledge. In short, there must be more than one type of intuition. What of our immediate consciousness of our own inner self? Was this subject to the same conditions as our knowledge of the external world? E. Peillaube¹ first voiced the opinion that consciousness had an immediate experience of the self in act². The intuition of the self by self was therefore not abstract but existential. But Bergson had discovered this very thing in his first work, Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience, which was published in 1889, six years before Peillaube's work. The self as existing in time he named 'la durée réelle':

La durée se présente ainsi à la conscience immédiate, et elle conserve cette forme tant qu'elle ne cède pas la place à une représentation symbolique, tirée de l'étendue ... Au-dessous de la durée homogène, symbole extensif de la durée vraie, une psychologie attentive démêle une durée dont les moments hétérogènes se pénètrent; au dessous de la multiplicité qualitative; au-dessous du moi aux états bien définis, un moi où succession implique fusion et organisation (L'Essai, p. 85).

This new departure led to much exploration of the 'intuition du moi' by others, notably Roland-Gosselin and Maritain, both of whom acknowledged the influence of Bergson on their researches³.

Then Maritain, at about the time of Les degrés du savoir (1932) conceived of the possibility of an aesthetic intuition of beauty which

1. 1864-1934. Professeur at Institut Catholique 1896-1912 and its Dean thereafter.

2. In his Théorie des concepts; existence, origine, valeur (Lethiellieux, 1895): "Dans l'intuition synthétique de la conscience, nous saisissons le moi dans l'acte et l'acte dans le moi ... Grâce à nos opérations, nous sommes donc immédiatement présents à nous-mêmes, et nous nous saisissons directement dans une intuition" (p. 354).

3. See Chapters Three and Seven.

he called 'preconscious' in the sense that it was present in the mind prior to the abstracting process¹. Here was another intuition which was direct and pre-conceptual. Maritain also wondered about man's knowledge of God. Was this in any sense abstractive or could it be immediate and existential?²

It was not by chance that Bergson analyzed both the aesthetic intuition of beauty and the existential knowledge of God. He asserted that spiritual realities were directly known and in fact defined intuition in general as "la vision directe de l'esprit par l'esprit" (P.M., p. 1274):

(l'intuition) voudrait saisir dans les choses ...
leur participation à la spiritualité, nous dirions
à la divinité.

Thus, the idea of intuition as pre-conceptual knowledge eventually came to be sub-divided into various categories according to its object(s). The most interesting consequence of this was that these subdivisions were then 'rediscovered' in Aquinas's own philosophy. Bruce Wuellner reflects this trend in A dictionary of scholastic philosophy (Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, U.S.A., 1966) by listing under 'intuition' six different types of knowledge and under 'contuition' the knowledge of God (or spiritual reality in and through some aspect of creation).

Alongside this preoccupation with intuitive knowledge went another line of research in epistemology, which concerned the function of the will in the act of knowledge. This essentially Kantian or Augustinian bias nevertheless owed something to Bergson. Joseph Maréchal

1. This is discussed at length in Chapter Eight.

2. This subject is considered in the chapter on Maritain's philosophy (Chapter Seven).

(1878-1944)¹ was the leading exponent of the new theory. For Maréchal the intellect is no longer a passive mirror reflecting the outside world in an abstract picture - it is an active interpreter of the information it receives. The dynamism of the will is involved in our grasp of reality - we see things as they affect us and are relevant to our aims and objectives. The intellect is described as "une activité, orientée dans son fond le plus intime vers un terme dernier ... vers l'Etre absolu, Vrai et Bien absolus" (Etudes sur la psych. des mystiques, p. 120):

Devant le monde extérieur qui s'offre à son investigation, l'homme ne se comporte jamais comme un récepteur inerte. Dès le premier contact conscient avec la réalité, il analyse et il trie. Dans une unité objective indivisée, les sens et l'entendement font un découpage, isolent des phénomènes, dégagent des relations, saisissent des aspects caractéristiques. Et toute cette dissection ... s'opère ... de manière à réduire, dans la plus large mesure possible, l'originalité de l'objet perçu en une somme d'éléments déjà reconnus

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1. There are fairly full biographies of Maréchal in Mélanges, J. Maréchal Vol. I, Oeuvres (D. de Brouwer, 1950) and in Auguste Grégoire's 'Le Père Joseph Maréchal - In Memoriam' (Nouvelle Revue Théologique, 1945, p. 87). The Mélanges volume also includes an account of Maréchal's works. Maréchal was educated at the Collège du Sacré-Coeur, Charleroi, and entered the Jesuit Order in 1895, being destined for biological studies. In 1905 he accordingly became Docteur ès Sciences Naturelles. His first serious theological studies were between 1905 and 1909 and in 1908 he published his first philosophical article, "A propos du sentiment de présence chez les profanes et les mystiques" (Revue des questions scientifiques, Vol. 64, 1908, pp. 527-563, and Vol. 65, pp. 219-249 and 376-426). Between 1912 and 1914 he published other articles later to appear and achieve a wider readership in Etudes sur la psychologie des mystiques (Alcan, 1924). Maréchal's other masterpiece, Les cahiers sur le point de départ de la métaphysique, was never completed. The first three volumes were published between 1922 and 1923, the fourth was not finished and the fifth emerged somewhat mutilated after "seize mois de remaniements et de retouches" (as Maréchal himself put it in a quotation in the introduction to Mélanges, p. 12). These corrections were not so much Maréchal's own as those of his advisors, who feared that the Kantian slant of the work would meet with Papal disapproval. Between 1932 and 1935 Maréchal became a member of the Société philosophique de Louvain until poor health prevented him from teaching. In 1938 the Royal Academy of Belgium awarded him the 10 yearly prize in philosophy. After some years of ill-health Maréchal died in 1944.

et classés (p. 24).

Not only does Bergson similarly assert the intellect's organizing and classifying ability, but, like Maréchal, he also speaks of the way intelligence works in terms of the known, the familiar; and how it is unwilling or unable to recognize something really new (which is irreducible to classification:)

Notre intelligence ... a pour fonction essentielle d'éclairer notre conduite, de préparer notre action sur les choses, de prévoir, pour une situation donnée, les événements favorables ~~ou~~ défavorables qui pourront s'ensuivre (E.C., p. 519).

Comme la connaissance usuelle, la science ne retient des choses que l'aspect répétition. Si le tout est originel, elle s'arrange pour l'analyser en éléments ou en aspects qui soient à peu près la reproduction du passé (E.C., p. 519).

Maréchal considered that science ignores the particular object in time, analyzing only the general laws of its behaviour and he added, "Sur ce point - qui n'est guère contestable - nous pouvons renvoyer à la magistrale et décisive démonstration qu'en a donnée M. Bergson" (Etudes, p. 26). This reference to Bergson's L'Essai (1889) is followed by a distinction between qualitative and quantitative judgements. Science analyses its subject-matter in quantitative terms (p. 27). Such an emphasis favours a deterministic view of the Universe. Real life proves this view to be false:

Dans le vivant, l'idéal géométrique du déterminisme devient évidemment chimérique, puisque le caractère expérimental le plus décisif de la vie, c'est que les phénomènes qu'elle domine ne sont pas totalement prédéterminés en fonction de l'espace ... (Etudes, p. 29).

In essence this is an exact replica of the argument Bergson employs in L'Essai and later in the book Maréchal does acknowledge Bergson's inspiration in this regard (p. 176).

In the second chapter of Etudes Maréchal analyses 'le sentiment de

présence'. He defines presence as "la réalité immédiatement perçue" (p. 70). He criticizes the empiricist associationist viewpoint, as does Bergson in L'Essai, and then explains that the feeling of presence is not abstract knowledge:

La perception ou le sosie de la perception, peuvent apparaître au milieu des conditions qui n'offrent ni les éléments d'un raisonnement même implicite, ni les antécédents compliqués d'une 'réalisation' objective résultante (p. 89).

Our judgement of reality is secondary to our awareness of reality as presence. Philosophers normally consider reality as something involving the mind or feelings, or even the will, but the real is primordial. It is doubt, the unreal, fantasy and the subjective representation in the mind which require explanation. Judging something as real involves adding something to basic awareness:

Au lieu de chercher comment le réel sortirait de l'irréel, l'affirmation du doute, l'objectif du subjectif, voyons s'il ne serait plus simple et ... plus logique de poser en fait primitif le réel, l'affirmation et l'objectif (p. 110).

This reversal of the terms of the problem means that intelligence distorts our primitive awareness - "Les représentations libres commencent à s'opposer nettement à la sensation et à la perception" (p. 114, italics in original). Then Maréchal comes right to the point:

Le sentiment empirique de présence, la perception d'une réalité spatialisée, est un cas particulier d'intuition ... (p. 117, my underlining).

He defines intuition as "L'assimilation directe d'une faculté connaissante à son objet" (p. 117). In short, the mind can become other than itself in the act of knowing - it becomes what is known. Just how strikingly similar this is to Bergson's 'intuition' is quite apparent, for Bergson speaks of 'intuition' as "coïncidence" (P.M., p. 1394) and as "pénétration" (p. 1402) and adds that "philosopher consiste précisément à se placer, par

un effort d'intuition, à l'intérieur de cette réalité concrète ...

(P.M., p. 1430).

Sense intuition is by no means the highest or most complete form of intuition for Maréchal, for the human mind is always in quest of its ultimate goal; he calls it "une faculté en quête de son intuition" (Etudes, p. 121). This goal might be the unification of disparate elements or might be the assimilation of being, but in the end the sense of reality finds its satisfaction and fulfilment in 'le phénomène mystique fondamental: le sentiment direct de la présence de Dieu, ou même l'intuition de Dieu présent' (p. 124). The final point about intuition is paradoxical: it surpasses the limits of human psychology and yet at the same time commands its whole perspective (see p. 179).

The intuitive approach to life can be improved or sharpened by an integration of the elements of consciousness and the attainment of unity or singlemindedness (see Etudes, p. 437). This is not "une simplification", as Maréchal wrote at first¹, but "une raréfaction", as in the later revision (Etudes, p. 437). A quality of mind is achieved rather than a quantity of ideas and feelings, etc.².

What is noteworthy in Maréchal's Etudes is his use of Blondelian, Bergsonian and Kantian terms in preference to conventional Thomist ones. The psychological approach (which Bergson adopted) supplants the old 'objective' rationalist approach. In Le point de départ de la métaphysique, Cahier V - "Le Thomisme devant la philosophie critique" (D. de B., 2nd ed., 1949 [1st 1926]), Maréchal deliberately states the problem of knowledge

1. In the article "Réflexions sur l'étude comparée des mysticismes" (Revue des questions scientifiques, July-October 1926, see p. 34).

2. The latter can be identified with the discursive intellect, although this is not explicitly stated here.

in Kantian terms and then ostensibly attempts to solve it from a Thomist standpoint. But he takes on Kant and modern philosophy on its own terms. Cahier VI, a positive statement of Maréchal's own position, was never written and Cahier IV never completed¹. All this makes an objective assessment of Maréchal's position difficult.

In negative terms he opposed a static view of the intelligence as a rationalism which juxtaposed concepts in a fixed schema. Like Bergson, he wished to reinstate the reality of movement and emphasized the dynamism of intelligence as Bergson did. He regarded mind as something more fluid than a set of faculties and argued that the intelligence and the will in fact interpenetrate. Bergson also regarded the consciousness or the inner life as a unity in flux. All this is clear enough from a study of Maréchal's Etudes, however. In Le point de départ he also concentrates on the possibility of "la science objective d'un absolu" (Cahier V, p. 570).

He separates three phases of the process of knowing: precognitive experience, conceptual representation and, finally, the affirmation of judgement, which is not, however, the conclusion of logical reasoning alone. Because the problem is stated in Kantian terms the psychological evidence is all-important. Maréchal insists first that the mind's intuitive powers only attain phenomena as regards individual existence, but attain noumena (things as they are existing) through a transcendental perception of Being or Absolute Existence:

l'objet direct de connaissance, chez l'homme, est
phénoménal (sensible, ou relatif à du sensible) par
son élément de représentation, nouménal par sa
signification objective intégrale (p. 574).

This 'transcendental' knowledge is "la plénitude du vrai envisagé dans son

1. See Note 1, p. 6.

contenu; en d'autres termes: l'être possédé intelligiblement avec toute l'ampleur et toute la perfection possibles" (Mélanges .. "Le dynamisme intellectuel dans la connaissance objective", p. 88)¹.

The fullness of truth is what the will desires and this gives an impetus to the mind to go beyond phenomena to seek "la connaissance divine des objets" (Le point de départ, p. 595). The fullness of truth is not therefore known through sense perception alone: it has the character of "une intuition intellectuelle de l'être" (Mélanges, p. 88). The intellect is conformed to Being - "adaequatio rei et intellectus" (Mélanges, p. 76). This, for Maréchal, has to mean Being beyond sense perception alone.

The judgement - 'une fonction d'unité' (Le point de départ, p. 296) - affirms one's tentative representation of reality. This affirmation is called the "fonction objective du jugement" (p. 299) and is in fact a "substitut inférieur de l'intuition intellectuelle" (p. 304) but is "logiquement préalable"² when it confirms the identity between "des synthèses empiriques" and "l'unité de l'être" (Etudes, p. 6).

The latter analysis has little in common with Bergsonism, for Maréchal here moves away from reliance on the evidence of experience to positing a clearcut distinction between empirical and transcendental intuitions and in fact rules that "expérience et métaphysique sont orientées en sens inverse: la première vers le fait brut, la seconde vers l'absolu ontologique" ("Au seuil de la métaphysique: abstraction ou intuition?",

1. 1st published in Revue néo-scholastique de philosophie, Vol. 28, 1927, pp. 137-165.

2. Etudes, p. 70.

Mélanges, p. 118)¹. Nevertheless, Maréchal did concede ground to Bergson as well as to Kant in admitting that the apprehending intellect (intuition) made judgements about the existence and nature of things prior to the work of the discursive intellect and this was a major concession. He also regarded the mind as a unity of thought, will and emotion; insisted on its natural grasp of reality (a built-in tendency) and reinstated the psychological approach to philosophy over against the static ontological one.

It is largely outside the scope of this work to examine the post-war thinking of the Louvain school of neo-Thomism, but one example may suffice to show how Maréchal's innovations - conceived as a reaction primarily to Kant and secondly to Bergson - were taken up and extended by J. Defever, S.J. (Professeur de Philosophie at Louvain). Defever had La Preuve réelle de Dieu published in 1953 (Deoclée de Brouwer). He acknowledges his debt to Maréchal at the outset: "on aura vite fait de voir que nous nous inspirons largement de lui" (p. 11), but Bergson is also a strong stimulus:

Depuis Ockham déjà, depuis Kant surtout, depuis Bergson plus que jamais, on a accumulé contre (la philosophie de saint Thomas) des objections qui reviennent toujours à dire ceci: la notion de Dieu n'est qu'un idéal abstrait et inconsistant, pour ne pas dire contradictoire, une simple projection des fonctions heuristiques et régulatrices de l'entendement (p. 7, my underlining).

The attack on reasoning about abstractions leads Defever to point out that his proof of God's existence "part du réel, ne perd pas le réel en cours de route et aboutit à l'existence du Dieu réel" (p. 7). He does

1. Maréchal only solves the Kantian problem of knowledge by arguing that the intellect is directed, in spite of itself, towards transcendental knowledge. It is the reality of this orientation that Blondel attempted to prove in L'Action (1889).

in fact (though not explicitly) make a distinction between abstract reasoning and reasoning about abstractions. Whereas the first is indispensable and can be in touch with reality, the latter is a trap into which many philosophers fall; it is the abstraction operated by the mind which reduces "toute la riche réalité qui s'offre à nous, pour ne garder alors qu'un sujet à priori conceptuel et idéal, dont le monde - un monde tout aussi conceptuel - se déduirait comme un absolu" (p. 19). Defever favours a continual oscillation or movement between the concept and its object in the manner of Bergson's "va-et-vient" mentioned in "L'Effort Intellectuel" (P.M., p. 942). Contact with the existent is desirable at all times; otherwise the mind's object becomes a mere representation. The power to abstract itself from its object constitutes the intellect's greatest virtue and yet its gravest peril. The virtue lies in the ability to transcend the particular and quantitative to seize the 'essence' and the peril in the tendency of mind to detach itself from sense data.

Everything that is known is known through intimate liaison with the world outside:

Nous ne passons de l'inconscience à la conscience que par et dans nos activités; or, celles-ci ne pouvant être parfaitement immanentes ... portent nécessairement sur une chose sensible; nous ne pouvons nous connaître qu'à travers l'objet sensible de notre activité (p. 13).

Defever comments that "l'exigence thomiste rejoint sur ce point celle des existentialistes" (p. 15), although in fact it is closer to Blondel. For Defever, as for Blondel and Bergson, experience surpasses sense perception alone. Consciousness is never submerged in the perception of material objects: "elle implique toujours, en outre, la conscience d'avoir conscience de l'objet, donc de le transcender" (p. 14). The significance of this is Bergsonian, not Sartrean, for Defever wishes to establish the reality and

importance of the inner witness of consciousness as a positive factor in knowing and not as a néant, as in Sartre:

L'expérience externe doit donc se doubler de l'expérience interne, qui sera de l'ordre de l'intuition intellectuelle. Celle-ci, toutefois, engagée dans la perception sensible, reste d'abord implicite (p. 15).

The relationship between subjective consciousness and objective reality is important, for the consciousness's very adaptation to reality, its identity with its object, points to a cause of this identity which upholds and guarantees rationality in the world:

Constatons que cette identification intentionnelle du sujet intelligent (intellectus), à travers l'objet immanent (intelligible), à l'objet réel (res), sous l'influx final - causal de celui-ci, vérifie à la fois la définition du jugement et celle de la vérité (p. 38).

God is therefore the creator and vindicator of the intellect's grasp of the real. As with Maréchal and Maritain, in Defever the intuitive or apperceptive aspect of intelligence furnishes the best proof of God's existence. Chains of reasoning are prone to logical flaws. The observing intellect also sees beyond appearances:

sous l'objet sensible immédiat se dissimule, comme sous sa participation déficiente, l'existence pure et illimitée; c'est elle qui donne à notre acte de connaître, à travers les causes finies, sa réalité propre (p. 57).

No single existent contains its own "raison d'être" but relates to the totality of Being which is infinite: "l'être fini n'existe et n'est intelligible que dans la mesure où il participe de l'être qui existe infiniment par soi" (p. 68).

The difficulty with Defever's reasoning is that it is impossible to see how the last assertions can be proved or disproved. How could they be verified? The lack of a concrete reference - either in human psychology or in science - lays Defever open to the charge he is eager

to avoid - that of composing abstract proofs of God's existence.

Etienne Gilson, primarily a historian of philosophy, was also a Thomist philosopher in his own right, and was perhaps better placed than most to have a comprehensive view of the developments in Thomist thought as compared with the developments in contemporary philosophy. His own philosophical outlook was to undergo several radical changes in the course of his career. The influence of Bergson was pronounced from the beginning, for Gilson was one of the few 'professionnels' in Bergson's audience for the early 'conférences': "Que d'heures n'avons-nous pas consommées en entretiens passionnés sur la dernière leçon de Bergson que nous venions de relire", he states in Le philosophe et la théologie (Lib. A. Fayard, 1960, p. 51). Owing to his sympathy and first-hand knowledge of Bergsonism, Gilson avoided the excesses of the early Thomist critique of Bergson: "Ils avaient partiellement raison," he says of these critics, "mais ils s'y sont mal pris" (Théologie et Philosophie, S. Thomas d'Aquin et Henri Bergson, 2 Conférences¹). Bergson had his revenge, for, ironically enough, in the long term, "cette rencontre apparaît d'ailleurs comme une redécouverte du vrai Saint Thomas d'Aquin, que trop de nuances avaient dissimulé (Id.).

For Gilson Bergson's main virtue consisted in his providing a stimulus to Catholic (Thomist) metaphysics:

Cette philosophie de Bergson, si impuissante à éclairer la religion, aurait pu être pour des philosophes chrétiens l'occasion d'un renouvellement de perspectives, le prélude à une nouvelle ère de fécondité doctrinale ... Il s'agissait ... de métamorphoser la philosophie nouvelle à la lumière du thomisme ... (Le philosophe et la théologie, pp. 125-126).

1. S.l.n.d. This newspaper report is to be found in "Le fonds Bergson" of la Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, Paris, under Gilson's name, but there is no indication as to the source or date of the article.

Bergson reinstated an empirical method in metaphysics and valued experience as the best guide to truth. In this he could, in Gilson's opinion, be compared to Aristotle (p. 129). Bergson's critique of the intellect was aimed at restoring true intellectual enquiry:

Le philosophe selon le coeur de Bergson ne doit pas se contenter d'appliquer son esprit à la connaissance rationnelle des choses telles qu'elles sont, il s'emploie de tout son pouvoir à toujours mieux ajuster à la nature des choses la connaissance qu'il en a ... A cet égard, la philosophie de Bergson est une critique d'un certain mauvais usage de la raison conduite par une intelligence éprise de rigueur (p. 129).

Bergson's first major triumph (in L'Essai) was in releasing qualitative judgements from their reduction to quantitative ones. By removing the inner self from the dominion of space and the material measurement of time, Bergson won a great victory for metaphysics: "pour la première fois depuis des siècles la métaphysique osait livrer une bataille décisive, et la gagnait" (p. 134). By contrast, the older scholastic definition of quality as an accident which completes substance in its being was still-born and ineffective, failing to nail any target: "Ce n'était rien dire de faux, ce n'était rien dire d'efficace" (p. 133).

In his own domain¹, Bergson did some sound work - his theory of intuition was of great significance, for Comte and Kant imagined that they had rendered the possibility of metaphysical knowledge inconceivable. The false conception of intelligence assumed that it could only regulate the relations between fixed ideas; that all its activity lay in the discursive area and that it had no real capacity to apprehend externals.

Secondly, Bergson restored to theology the notion of an active God, whereas the high Thomists had rendered him, "toute statique, d'une essence

1. That of natural theology, in Gilson's opinion (see p. 177).

dont la perfection consiste seulement à rester éternellement ce qu'elle est" (p. 168).

Gilson's own Thomism is clearly affected by his admiration for Bergson. His realism has two main aspects: the assurance of the existence of the external world and, in addition, this significant corollary: the assurance that our intellect is conformed to external reality. He posits 'spirituality' as the condition for human knowledge, since the spirit (or mind) can become other than itself; this is the ability to make for oneself what something else was only in itself: "Connaître une chose, c'est une manière de la devenir" (Le Thomisme, J. Vrin, 1927, p. 229). This viewpoint, needless to say, is entirely Bergsonian. Gilson's concession to more conventional Thomism is to say that being-in-the-mind is "l'espèce impressée"; that is, it is external being in a certain mode of existence; it is "l'intelligible ou le sensible de l'objet lui-même, sous un autre mode d'existence" (Le Thomisme, p. 234, note 1). This seems to be equivalent to saying that it is an image or a substitute for an object, but "il est capital de bien comprendre que l'espèce d'un objet n'est pas un être, et l'objet d'un autre être; elle est l'objet même par mode d'espèce, c'est-à-dire l'objet considéré dans l'action et dans l'efficacité qu'il exerce sur un sujet ..." (p. 234). It is not the object as an image in the mind but in some way the object itself in its effect on the mind.

The second type of "espèce" in the mind is the "espèce expresse", which is in fact more like a concept: "Le concept n'est pas la chose, mais l'intellect qui le conçoit est, lui, véritablement la chose dont il se forme un concept" (Le Thomisme, p. 238).

Does this mean, then; that in the case of "l'espèce impressée" the mind has a direct intuition of being as it exists? Gilson shies away from this. He says that the intellect 'becomes' the object while remaining

itself and therefore does not know the object as object but through the intellect's life and capacities:

Il y a l'objet, qui n'est pas saisi en soi par une intuition; il y a la species, qui n'est toujours que l'objet; et n'est donc pas davantage saisie par une intuition; il y a l'intellect informé par la species, qui devient ainsi l'objet, et qui n'a non plus l'intuition directe de ce qu'il est par là devenu; il y a enfin le concept, première représentation consciente de l'objet ... (Le Thomisme, p. 238, note 2).

In short, it appears that the object only 'comes to life' and is only known through conceptual understanding. But there is in Gilson's research a very important conclusion, which highlights a new departure for Thomism: that "aucune représentation intermédiaire ne sépare donc l'objet du concept qui l'exprime, et c'est ce qui confère à notre connaissance conceptuelle son objectivité" (Id., italics in original). So the experience of existence is prior to, anterior to, discursive analysis and representation of the object 'in the mind's eye'. Knowledge of an object preceded reflection upon it.

The true significance of Gilson's position rests on its faith in the individual experience. For Gilson the individual real gives rise to a universal notion of reality and not vice versa; something true gives rise to truth, and so on:

Enquêtant sur les conditions de possibilité d'un tel fait, nous comprenons que la naissance du concept présuppose la fécondation de l'intellect par le réel qu'il appréhende. Avant la vérité, il y a le vrai; avant l'adéquation du jugement et du réel, il y a l'adéquation vécue de l'intellect même avec le réel; c'est parce qu'il le devient que l'intellect peut ensuite en concevoir l'essence. Mais cette métaphysique réaliste elle-même n'est qu'une interprétation postérieure de l'évidence sensible initiale, de cette entrée de la chose en nous que nous appelons une sensation (Le Réalisme Méthodique, Téqui, 1936, p. 82).

Gilson thus goes further than Maréchal on two counts: he refuses to

move into transcendental realms to justify the sense of reality and he is unafraid to interpret 'adaequatio rei et intellectus' as meaning that the intellect 'becomes' its object in an immaterial but real way, and he places a new emphasis on the evidence of the senses rather than that of the intellectual 'species'. There is no veil between the inner and outer worlds:

Chaque fois qu'il s'agit pour nous de vérifier une existence, c'est au témoignage d'un ou de plusieurs de nos sens ... que nous recourons pour en décider (p. 197).

Gilson also moves right away from the Thomist reverence for intelligence as such and postulates a theory of the whole mind or consciousness, taking Maréchal's tentative reunion of will and intellect a step further:

Ce n'est pas, à proprement parler, l'intelligence ou le sens qui connaît, c'est l'homme qui connaît par les sens et par l'intelligence (p. 507).

Gilson is not even just referring to man as consciousness, but to man in his material and concrete existence. In this he differs from Bergson, who tends to identify the self with consciousness. Therefore, the objects of sense perception (i.e. the particular existent) and of the intellect (i.e. the 'essence', or nature of a thing) are not rigidly separated; the two are reconciled in the awareness of the whole man:

Le fait initial de la connaissance, dont cette analyse n'est que l'approfondissement progressif, est donc la saisie directe d'une réalité intelligible, par un intellect que sert une sensibilité (Le Thomisme, 1942 revision, p. 326, italics in original).

Blaise Romeyer, the Jesuit Professor of Philosophy at Le Puy, like Gilson underwent profound influence from Bergson from the time of his youth. He had an early Bergsonian work, Le bon sens et les études classiques, published for the first time in 1947 (at Clermont-Ferrand, Editions de L'Epervier). In the postscript Romeyer revealed that he had enjoyed Bergson's close friendship between 1932 and 1939 (see pp. 55-56), visiting

him for lengthy discussions. He deemed Matière et Mémoire to be Bergson's magisterial work (p. 54) and considered Plotinus to be the major influence on L'Evolution Créatrice. This led Bergson "à faire des fouilles du côté des problèmes religieux" (pp. 54-55). Romeyer wrote a sympathetic book on Bergson (Morale et Religion chez Bergson, Firmin-Didot, 1929) along these very lines, and also wrote a number of articles on him¹.

Romeyer did some important work of his own on intuition, and came to the conclusion that, although Aquinas had restricted man's knowledge of individual material objects to an abstract knowledge, nevertheless there was room for direct forms of intuition in other realms of perception. There is a clear connection between Bergson's intuition of 'la durée' in L'Essai (the self existing in time) and Romeyer's conclusion in "La doctrine de Saint Thomas sur la vérité" (Archives de Philosophie, Vol. III, Cahier II, pp. 1-54) that reflection on our own mental acts allows us to perceive directly the existence of our soul. He wrote:

L'âme atteint son existentialité concrète en ses intellections premières, cela dans la mesure même où, avant réflexion complète, elle en prend directement conscience parce que actuellement présente en elles ... Cette première connaissance ou perception expérimentale de l'âme par elle-même est consciente, donc actuelle, mais point réflexive (pp. 24-25, italics in original).

Knowledge of the soul (or self) and of God - both outside the scope of Aristotle's epistemology - are intuitive forms of knowledge in Aquinas's system thanks to St. Augustine's teachings on the subject. Further,

1. "Spiritualité et survie d'après Bergson" (Rev. de Phil., March-April 1933, pp. 117-156): "La liberté humaine d'après M. Bergson" (Rev. néo-scolastique, Vol. 35, 1933, pp. 190-219): "Autour du Bergsonisme" (Archives de Phil. Supp. bibliog. No. 2, 1946) and "Caractéristiques religieuses du spiritualisme de Bergson" (Archives de Phil., Vol. 17, Cahier 1).

Aquinas gives man's intellectual knowledge of the material a 'spiritualizing' character, according to Romeyer. In other words, the intellect makes matter a spiritual form in the mind. This is why matter is not apprehended as matter. However, 'spiritualizing' is not necessarily the same as 'abstracting', which is merely a conceptualizing process:

Nos idées, soit de la matière, soit de l'esprit humain ne sont pas de purs abstraits, sortes d'atomes intentionnels détachés du réel, elles se rattachent, grâce à ce minimum d'intuition intellectuelle des singuliers qui nous revient, à ces singuliers eux-mêmes (*Id.*, p. 17, italics in original).

One's representation of the material "enveloppe une perception mentale de réalité" ("St. Thomas et notre connaissance de l'esprit humain", Arch. de Phil., Vol. VI, Cahier 2, p. 108, my underlining).

For Romeyer, the intellect actively moulds itself to the clay of material objects, responding to their stimulus. Romeyer's theory typifies the new Thomist approach, which assumes that things as existing in time can be integrated into the realm of the intelligible - and this realm includes not only physical but also mental and spiritual realities. There must be at least two orders of the intellect: the ideal order (bearing no direct relation to existence) and the real order (existence as thought)¹.

In an article, "La liberté humaine d'après Henri Bergson (Revue néo-scholastique de phil., Vol. 35, 1933, pp. 190-219), Romeyer defends

1. R. Jolivet, neo-Thomist philosopher, named these faculties 'discours' and 'intuition'. (Maritain, like Rousselot and Maréchal, saw a distinction between 'ratio' and 'intellectus'.) Jolivet wrote: "Le discours n'aboutirait jamais à rien de certain, si, par application à ses démarches successives des normes suprêmes de la certitude, il ne venait lui-même se résoudre et s'achever dans l'intuition des principes premiers de la raison" ("L'intuition intellectuelle" in Revue Thomiste, No. 15, 1932, pp. 53-54). By and large, Jolivet opposes Bergson. See, e.g., "De l'E.C. aux Deux Sources" in Revue Thomiste, May-June 1933, pp. 348-367.

one of Bergson's other major theses; that of the freedom of the will. Romeyer, in so doing, was facing not only positivist or determinist opposition but Catholic opposition too¹.

Romeyer's Bergsonian vocabulary is overlaid with religious ideas:

Lorsque nous sommes vaillants en face du devoir, notre liberté croit. Nous parvenons mieux à nous recueillir, à nous posséder, à nous régir, à dominer ou à faire nôtres les éléments divers de notre moi au fur et à mesure de sa durée (p. 197).

Romeyer aligns Bergson's doctrine with the scholastic one of 'indifférence active' (p. 203). This does not imply that a man is pulled hither and thither and finally decides between alternatives, but on the contrary - "c'est moi qui, par l'exercice de mon vouloir, rends déterminants les motifs et mobiles de ce vouloir. Plus ou moins riche de spontanéité personnelle, il en possède toujours assez pour se révéler exempt de toute nécessité soit externe soit interne" (p. 200).

Once again, with Romeyer, there is a new preoccupation with the whole man's involvement in acting freely as against the rationalist intellectual freedom of choice. The whole self can stand aside from a given situation, can detach itself from any given pressures and can act according to its own natural penchant and can thereby dominate the situation, which is hardly ever one of a simple choice between alternatives anyway:

La liberté est maîtrise, domination, mais non proprement insensibilité de la volonté à l'égard des motifs et mobiles (p. 203).

Bergson himself appears to adopt this type of approach. In the Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie (1910, p. 164), he wrote that in moments of real choice he considered that "la liberté consiste à être entièrement soi-même, à agir en conformité avec soi: ceci serait donc ...

1. E.g., Maritain had attacked it in La philosophie bergsonienne (1914).

l'indépendance de la personne vis-à-vis de tout ce qui n'est pas elle ...".

Like Romeyer, A.D. Sertillanges, O.P.¹, commended Bergson's proof of the freedom of the will and saw in it a parallel with the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas. Sertillanges was the neo-Thomist philosopher perhaps most in sympathy with Bergson. He used Bergson's authority extensively in his own writings and attempted a reappraisal of him in the light of newer Thomist 'rediscoveries'. He was asked to vindicate his own position with regard to Bergsonism and wrote a work on Bergson's threat to Catholic orthodoxy. This was published in 1943 as Lumières et Périls du Bergsonisme (Flammarion). In it St. Thomas is upheld as the guardian of truth: "Ce qui le retient, c'est le vrai, et il n'y a pas de degrés dans le vrai ... Prenez donc garde aux philosophes partielles ..." (p. 17).. However, the reader is exhorted to follow "la voie médiane" (p.19) between Bergson's and Aquinas's points of view:

S'il n'y a pas de ligne médiane entre des systèmes, il peut y en avoir entre des points de vue, des notions empreintes de vérité à certains égards et que, d'autres vérités peuvent servir à compléter, à rendre plus compréhensives, ou plus fortes (p. 19).

Sertillanges does not accept Bergson's critique of the concept as it stands (see p. 21), nor the strict limitations of his "empirisme métaphysique" (p. 23) but, as mentioned, praises Bergson's proof of free will: "Bergson et Saint Thomas coïncident parfaitement ici, quoi qu'on ait dit ..." (pp. 28-29).

Sertillanges devoted an article to the subject entitled "Le libre arbitre

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1. Sertillanges, Antonin-Gilbert (1863-1948). Born in Clermont-Ferrand. Studied at Collège des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes. 1883 entered Order of Preachers. Lectured in theology 1890 at Corbara, then (1893-) at Paris; Couvent du Saint Sacrement. Secrétaire de rédaction of Revue Thomiste. 1900 chair in Moral Phil. at Institut Catholique, Paris. Directed Revue des Jeunes. Moved to Couvent d'Etudes, Lyon, then Rijckholt, Holland, then Saulchoir, Belgium. Finally retired to Paris to write. August 1934 Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. December 1935 Prédicateur général of Dominican Order.

chez Saint Thomas et Henri Bergson" (La Vie Intellectuelle, 25.3.1937, pp. 252-269). He quite deliberately condemned the neo-Thomists for misinterpreting Aquinas's doctrine:

En effet, nous thomistes, nous faisons du libre arbitre un fruit de 'volonté délibérée', et si la délibération n'est qu'un jeu de concepts ... nous voilà condamnés, semble-t-il, au déterminisme (p. 252).

It was Bergson, said Sertillanges, who reinstated the truth which Aquinas had discovered¹, but which had been lost to sight. Firstly, free will has to be considered as "une donnée immédiate de la conscience" (p. 253) because "objectiver la conscience, qui est subjective, est la livrer aux liaisons nécessaires des constructions abstraites, c'est la détruire" (p. 254). If a decision is a mere judgement between concepts, the one making the strongest impression is bound to persuade, but this would make the subject just "une bascule inerte et son regard un simple spectateur" (p. 254). On the other hand, "si la personne garde son activité éclairée, les motifs, de ce fait, par leur causalité, ne font que l'exprimer elle-même, et alors l'acte est libre" (p. 254). Such an act is spontaneous but is not simply spontaneity as such, since "rien ne peut agir sur le sujet sans lui, non pas même son moi d'hier ou celui de la minute qui précède" (p. 255). In short, the whole person chooses and creates the motive(s) and dominates the action. We do not choose because we find one course or reason preferable but instead we find something preferable because we choose it: "on trouve des raisons d'agir, parce que d'abord on veut agir" (p. 256). For Aquinas, it is intelligence ('le conseil') which determines the will, but, according to Sertillanges, Aquinas is anti-intellectual in one sense, "puisque le conseil, ici, reste indéterminé

1. Or, rather, rediscovered in Augustine.

en dehors de l'intervention du vouloir lui-même" (p. 262). Also, for Aquinas, "l'acte libre a une 'rationalité'; le libre arbitre n'est pas aveugle; mais l'acte libre est incommensurable à l'idée, parce que nulle idée n'égale en extension la capacité de notre être" (p. 263).

Sertillanges thus attempts to reconcile Bergson and Aquinas, seeking the 'voie médiane' between intellect and will. If man were dominated by reasons conjured by the intelligence he would be subject to a psychological determinism; if he were determined blindly by the will, he would be subject to instinctive or animal spontaneity.

Sertillanges thus supports the central thesis of L'Essai, that of the freedom of the will; elsewhere he shows his support for the main contention of Matière et Mémoire as well - namely, the independence (but interdependence) of mind and body: "ce n'est pas un piège que vous rencontrez, mais un secours," he tells the seminarists (Lumières et Périls, p. 29). Bergson has demonstrated through this that "l'immortalité de l'âme est une idée expérimentale" (p. 29). It is L'Evolution Créatrice which he takes to task as dangerous to orthodox Catholicism: it is "une mer de glace" (p. 30), and for this reason:

Intégrer ... l'intelligence à l'évolution est grave ... puisque surtout la matière n'est ici conçue que comme une retombée de l'esprit, bien loin d'être sa cause ou bien sa substance (p. 30).

But, although Sertillanges attempts in this book to discount the conclusions of E.C., elsewhere he displays a profound admiration for the work. For example, he pays tribute to Bergson for destroying the over-precise distinction between nature and supernatural and for seeing that God pervades all of his creation (even while extending beyond it): reality "manifeste une orientation, une direction de la force ayant déjà le caractère d'une finalité", but "les actions particulières de la nature, tout comme des

êtres particuliers, sont quelque chose de dérivé, de second" ("L'Ordre du monde et les causes finales", Vie Intellectuelle, 10.1.32, p. 55).

This all leads to the conclusion that:

la nature est un tout étroitement solidaire, et ses parties constituantes sont aussi de toutes, jusqu'à une limite qui fuit devant le regard et devant la pensée qui analyse (Id.).

Thomists should not conceive of creation as a passage between pure nothingness and the fullness of Being, but rather "comme une action intermédiaire entre Dieu et le monde, entre Dieu, cause du monde, et le monde, son effet" (Sertillanges, Les grandes thèses de la philosophie thomiste, Bloud et Gay, 1928, p. 83). This flies in the face of the teaching of Tonquédec and Garrigou-Lagrange, who insist on creation ex nihilo¹, but accords with Bergson's arguments against the idea of a void in E.C. (see pp. 728-746) and also with his idea of creation as an effect of 'l'élan vital' pre-existing in the Universe. Matter is considered by Sertillanges to be "un résidu d'esprit, une dégénérescence de l'esprit" (Id., p. 30) exactly as in Bergsonism.

Perhaps most surprising of all is Sertillanges's overt idealism. If, for Bergson, the substructure of the Universe is 'l'élan vital', for Sertillanges it is 'la pensée':

Connaissant par l'idée, connaissant comme nous
que tout communique dans la même essence (op. cit., p. 20),

we find that

l'être pense, est pensé, et se pense et en dehors
de là il n'y a rien. Dans sa plénitude, en Dieu,
l'être sera Pensée de la Pensée ... dans les esprits

1. See Chapter Three. The Lateran Council had failed to define this dogma with absolute precision (1112 A.D.).

il est pensée morte; mais toujours la pensée est le dernier mot (p. 20).

The only basic difference between Bergson and Sertillanges on this is that Sertillanges wants to give some intellectual content to the spiritual creative power in the Universe. He stresses the order in creation: "L'intelligence est l'oeil de la nature ... l'intelligence nous révèle notre affinité avec tout; elle est le signe de l'unité profonde de la nature" (p. 22).

Having said this much about the rationality of the Universe, Sertillanges nevertheless has little time for high Thomist logic, especially its use in 'proving' God's existence. Logic can only render at best "une construction systématique imposante et ferme de l'hypothèse Dieu" (p. 58). God is beyond dogmatic or conceptual definition - "Dieu ne peut être défini, ni en tout, ni en partie, d'une définition positive" (pp. 67-68). Definitions only have a negative value - to define what God is not.

Sertillanges is far more suspicious of Les Deux Sources than of any other of Bergson's works. He is more concerned over what is omitted than what is included. For him, Bergson fails to give his opinions a metaphysical base or framework "dont le rôle serait non de suppléer nos instincts, non de 'construire l'obligation' en son fondement psychologique, mais de justifier cette obligation afin de l'élever au plan de la raison, qui est la caractéristique de l'être moral" (Bergson et le Catholicisme, Flammarion, 1941, pp. 52-53). "On nous laisse seul avec nos états, avec nos émotions" (Lumières et Périls du Bergsonisme, p. 38). Furthermore, the crucial problem of suffering and evil is passed over

virtually in silence¹.

Sertillanges's dissatisfaction with Les Deux Sources is echoed by other Catholic voices. Gilson makes the point that in it Bergson's method is at fault, for it works only in the realm of nature and is incompetent to analyze the supernatural. For him, Bergson inevitably ends by examining the experience of mystics rather than the object of their experience, which is ostensibly the real subject of Les Deux Sources. Bergson is left "tentant de ... comprendre le sens (de la vie) en l'observant du dehors comme s'il fût agi de quelque nouvel aspect de la réalité naturelle" (Le philosophe et la théologie, p. 181). "On peut prolonger aussi loin qu'on voudra la science de la nature, elle ne rejoindra jamais le surnaturel" (p. 182)².

R. Jolivet makes an analogous criticism in "De l'Evolution Créatrice aux Deux Sources" (Revue Thomiste, May-June 1933). He thinks that for Bergson:

La vraie religion est essentiellement le sens et le goût de l'Infini. La Révélation n'est pas la communication mystérieuse, faite dans le temps à l'humanité, de vérités déterminées, mais ... une intuition et un sentiment, une émotion, situés au-delà de la conscience claire ... De ce point de vue, les concepts, même ceux qui concernent Dieu, sont assez indifférents. Dieu se manifeste en nous immédiatement par le sentiment (p. 354).

Pierre Mesnard, in a classical dialogue style article in La Revue Apologétique of May 1933 ("Catholicisme et bergsonisme", pp. 546-557), is worried

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1. This point is taken up in more detail later by Raymond Polin (Etudes berg. III, P.U.F., 1951, "H. Bergson et le mal"), and by E. Amado-Lévy-Valensi, "Bergson et le mal. Y a-t-il un pessimisme bergsonien?", Actes du Congrès de Philosophie de langue française, 1959 (Lib. A. Colin, pp. 7-11).
 2. C.f. Etienne Borne in La Passion de la Vérité (Lib. A. Fayard, 1962): "Une philosophie ne peut jamais coïncider avec une religion du surnaturel comme le christianisme, car elle est d'un autre ordre" (p. 62).

by Bergson's treatment of the historicity and divinity of Christ in

Les Deux Sources:

Le Christ n'étant pas défini expressément comme Dieu, tous les attributs absolus de l'Eglise s'en trouvent ébranlés, par exemple, l'unicité de sa mission, et l'infailibilité de sa doctrine (p. 554).

This criticism might be valid if Bergson were writing an apology for the Christian faith, but the scant references to Christ in Les Deux Sources do not in fact say much either way - and all this is extraneous to the central theme of the book.

Sertillanges actually did write to Bergson and had talks with him on the subject of Les Deux Sources up to the time of his death. In 1941 he published Avec Henri Bergson (Gallimard). The question of Christ's divinity was ruled out of court by Bergson:

Je me suis donné pour règle de n'affirmer que ce qui résulte clairement de ma méthode de recherche, et j'ai eu surplus mes raisons de ne pas trop m'avancer dans cette voie (p. 20).

As for the church, Bergson saw it as "le prolongement du Christ. Ce n'est au fond qu'un même fait. Mais là encore je ne voudrais pas me trop avancer ..." (pp. 21-22).

Overall, Sertillanges was the warmest supporter of Bergson among neo-Thomist philosophers. The only major point of difference between Bergson and Sertillanges is over the nature of God, who for Bergson is above all Creator and Mover, but for Sertillanges is 'pensée' or 'intelligence'. Sertillanges recognizes this fact, for, while regretting that "les attributs métaphysiques de Dieu échappent à l'examen" in Bergsonism, nevertheless "Dieu est reconnu personnel, libre créateur, d'une puissance sans bornes assignables, 'universel amour' ..." (Le christianisme et les philosophes II, Aubier, Ed. Montaigne, 1941, p. 386). Bergson's God rises "au-dessus de la

durée créée" (p. 390). If Bergson's theodicy is "assez pauvre", nonetheless it has life and vitality, while "les théodicées purement philosophiques... s'offrent à nous comme des palais de glace ou tout au plus de cristal" (p. 386).

One little known and under-rated Catholic philosopher of this period was Emile Rideau, S.J. (Professeur de philosophie at the Collège Saint Francois d'Evreux and later at the Ecole Saint Geneviève)¹. Gilson does not mention him in his assessment of Bergson's influence on Catholics and yet Rideau made an original contribution, trying to highlight the Platonic and Augustinian tendencies of Bergson's thought in Le Dieu de Bergson (Alcan, 1932), Les rapports de la matière et de l'esprit dans le bergsonisme (Alcan, 1932) and in Descartes, Pascal, Bergson (Boivin et Cie., 1937).

Rideau's is a "critique positive et 'sympathique', sincèrement désireuse de repérer les contacts et les convergences" between Bergson and Catholicism (Le Dieu de Bergson, p. 5). He recognized that "tout système philosophique est une recherche vivante, une expression imparfaite de la Vérité totale ..." (p. 5) and this must presumably include Thomism itself.

Rideau gently points out where Catholics have up till then misinterpreted Bergson. He blames E.C. itself for creating various false impressions, for example, of anti-intellectualism, pragmatism and romanticism. In it, "malgré la limpidité de son style," there is still "un certain manque de clarté" (pp. 10-11). This is partly due to the imprecision of

1. The main influences on him, apart from Bergson, include Pascal, Descartes (in Descartes, Pascal et Bergson he wrote: "Le choix de ces trois auteurs a été dicté d'abord par des préférences personnelles" (p. 5); also Plato, Rousselot and Marechal (see Le Dieu de Bergson, p. 87) and, finally, Péguy (Id., p. 108).

"un flot d'images" (p. 11).

Notwithstanding the impression given of 'intelligence' in E.C., it is indisputable that "l'intuition prend son point d'appui et son élan sur la pensée; elle serait inintelligible sans elle, elle la conserve et l'informe" (p. 14). Intelligence has its limits and is a phase which leads to "un effort qui la dépasse et qui rétablisse l'unité de la vie dans l'amour" (p. 15). If intelligence "remonte sa pente" then "par son activité (elle) contribue au Retour des choses à l'Unité" (p. 15). Intellectual effort, understood this way, is "la matière même de l'intuition" (p. 15). Rideau quotes from "L'Effort Intellectuel" in order to justify his reading this attitude into E.C. and insists that intelligence is required to make a "retournement" (p. 16) towards intuition in order to gain in perceptive power.

If this is true, then 'intuition' is not anterior to discursive thought, as is so easily assumed, but is a flash of illumination after meditation. It does not usually precede thought but in fact is more often gained as a result of it - but not in the way of a conclusion to an argument, but rather as a breakthrough, a new vision.

A second major Catholic criticism of Bergson surrounded his conception of 'la durée' as substance. Again Rideau presents a more sympathetic account. For him, Bergson "n'accepte pas comme une position définitive le réalisme des qualités: leur devenir insaisissable ... s'exprime partiellement par l'intelligence humaine. La réflexion philosophique pose ce devenir pur comme une catégorie dialectique, mais reconnaît ... l'insuffisance de la pensée à l'exprimer pleinement ..." (p. 18). In other words, the mind, in abstracting reality, loses the 'substance' of being which must include movement and change to be complete. This explanation, adapted from Thomist thought, is quite ingenious as a

justification of Bergson. It accepts Bergson's point that the intellect 'atomizes' reality into concepts and adds to it the Thomist idea that concepts contain or retain the 'essence' and not the concrete existence. Thus, concrete existence, reached by 'intuition' in Bergsonism and by the senses in Thomism, is partly movement, as Bergson said, but is also substance, as Aquinas said. Given this interpretation, Bergson "croit à cette 'substance' infinie de la 'totalité des images' que la science a pour mission de traduire mieux" (pp. 19-20).

Rideau attacks the notion that faith is intellectual; a question of understanding or reflection:

Or, aucune attitude n'est plus anti-religieuse que cet orgueil de l'intelligence, avec sa prétention de tout régenter, de boucler sur elle-même, sa certitude de faire à elle seule le salut de l'individu et de la collectivité (pp. 29-30).

Intellectualism leads to pride, whereas faith leads to love and is distinguished by "sa gratuité, sa liberté, son obscurité" (p. 31).

Intellectualism can only prepare the ground for faith, for which a certain degree of Bergsonian 'anti-intellectualism' is required:

Or, par son aspect antirationaliste, on peut dire que le bergsonisme favorise et prépare partiellement cette mystique essentielle de la vie de foi (p. 32).

Instead of advocating the paramount importance of meditation, Bergson poses "le primat de l'expérience et du fait" (p. 56, italics in original). In Les rapports de la matière et de l'esprit Rideau takes this a step further. He considers that Bergson, far from following other philosophers in translating the evidence of the senses into concepts and laws, instead reveals "une évidence intérieure, puisée immédiatement aux sources de l'expérience", which itself "affirme l'existence d'un fait, irréductible à la pensée abstraite, et où se manifestent le mystère et l'infini de l'esprit: la durée ..." (p. 11).

The reinstatement of 'la durée' asserts the primacy of time and history as well as that of change and movement: "une philosophie de la durée peut se transposer en une théologie de la durée" (Le Dieu de Bergson, p. 129). In other words, God's restoration and redemption of humanity is supremely an event in time - "Cette histoire sainte est une histoire vivante, où tout le passé joue encore dans le présent" (p. 129)¹.

It is through a man's whole life, and not his intellect alone, that that faith is justified. Rideau calls this "le primat de la vie religieuse" (p. 62). "Le principe réflexif de raison est donc inséré dans la trame vivante du développement total de la conscience" (p. 64). Rideau even asserts that in one way Bergson was too rationalist - in that he expected mystical experience to furnish a proof of God's existence. It is not capable of doing this, because "l'existence de Dieu ... est en dehors de toute enquête scientifique et objective: on ne se 'renseigne' pas sur Dieu du dehors, comme on se documente auprès d'un explorateur" (pp. 71-72).

'Proof' only comes through involvement in the Christian life. "La dialectique s'inverse: maintenant c'est la Vie qui est première, logiquement: 'puissance de création'" (Les rapports, p. 54). Rideau considers that Aquinas himself evolved a philosophy of life rather than of the intellect, except that, whereas he, Aquinas, used the word 'Being' for this, Bergson used various terms - such as 'conscience', 'supraconscience', 'Dieu', 'l'absolu', 'l'Océan de la Vie', 'le Tout' and 'Exigence de création' (see pp. 40-44: all quoted from E.C.). Thus E.C. can be seen truly not as a series of arguments but as "la trace d'une faute mystérieuse et d'une chute dans l'histoire de la 'conscience' et de la Vie ..." (p. 55). Intelligence is

1. There are clear echoes of Péguy here, although Rideau does not acknowledge the fact at this point.

therefore not something which simply observes life from a superior vantage point; it is part of life and part of man. This, Rideau suggests, is Bergson's real argument in E.C. - that intelligence is geared to action and life:

Par sa puissance d'intention, l'intelligence participe et contribue au courant créateur, et l'évolution de la Vie trouve en elle son meilleur épanouissement, sa fécondité illimitée (p. 67).

In effect, life cannot be fully understood or expressed intellectually, since "la réalité est inexprimable ..." (p. 67). That is why in E.C. "tout est symbole et représentation" (p. 100, italics in original).

Intuition alone gives a necessary synthesis or world-picture, because by nature it is "une vision du monde, Weltanschauung" (p. 113). It is comprehensive: "Le premier but de l'intuition est donc une vision intégrale de l'univers" (p. 116, italics in original). It involves thought, but it is wider and deeper than this; it is "un approfondissement de conscience" (p. 116). It is more than apperception; it is the whole man's response to the Universe.

In Descartes, Pascal, Bergson, Rideau stresses the centrality of intuition in Bergson's philosophy by stating that "une chose est réelle quand elle est perçue ou capable de l'être" (p. 186). Intuition is above all a faculty of perception.

Bergson's Les Deux Sources, analyzed in the same work, is not dismissed so summarily by Rideau as by some Catholics. He regards its openness as a great virtue, for it is thereby "tout préparé à comprendre cette primauté de la grâce, si magnifiquement pensée par Péguy ..." ¹ (p. 108). Also, he appears to approve of Bergson's view that morality is "la réponse de

1. This time Péguy's influence on Rideau is acknowledged.

l'homme à la prévenance de l'Amour", which implies that sin is a closed, self-centred view of life which eliminates "toute expansion de la personne vers une autre personne dans la charité" (p. 108). In other words, morality is based on the attraction of love rather than on the reasonableness (or rationality) of right conduct or on the threat of judgement.

Even the vexed question of the absence of suffering and evil in Bergsonism is justified to some extent by Rideau:

L'idée de chute elle-même n'est pas absente ...
La spatialité du monde (et de l'intelligence) est
la décadence d'un état primitif de la 'conscience' ...
La conscience a perdu son désintéressement contemplatif ... (pp. 112-113).

Thus egoism and selfishness are counselled by the intellect. However, Bergson fails to go far enough, even in Rideau's eyes:

Toutes ces notes ... n'atteignent pas la réalité du péché personnel. Elles ne disent pas assez d'abord la violence de la passion, l'amour de la boue, la lourdeur de l'âme et l'impossibilité expérimentale de toucher, seuls, à l'idéal de la pureté (p. 115, italics in original).

Taken as a whole, the most significant aspect of Bergson's philosophy, with which Rideau wholeheartedly concurs, is its insistence on the reality of 'spirit'. The 'signs' of spirit are, first, the inherent movement and direction in and through matter - "la matière n'est pas une chose réelle, un objet statique et solidifié, mais plutôt une direction, un mouvement, une tendance de la Vie" (p. 193) - and then, secondly, the sign of creativity - "l'invention au cours de la durée" (p. 197) - and, thirdly, the reality of consciousness and memory in man, which give him liberty and moral choice: "La vie accède donc enfin en l'homme à l'objet de son désir: la lumière et la liberté" (p. 210).

Although Rideau and Sertillanges, in interpreting Bergson liberally and sympathetically, constantly give him the benefit of the doubt and

reassess his doctrines in the light of their own beliefs, they do not constructively adapt Bergsonism to their own use in the manner of Péguy. Jacques Chevalier is the one Catholic philosopher who does attempt this in a small way. He was not a highly influential thinker like Maritain, but had original insights. Like Gilson, he excelled in the writing of the history of philosophy.

Chevalier particularly showed his original turn of mind in "Le continu et le discontinu" (Annales de l'Université de Grenoble, Vol. III, No. 2, 1926, pp. 113-127), La science et le réel (Bloud et Gay, 1927) and also in his interpretation of the implications of Bergsonism (see last chapter of Henri Bergson, Plon, 1926, and Histoire de la Pensée, Vol. IV, Flammarion, 1966 [Texte revu et mis au point par Léon Husson]). Chevalier also wrote major works on Aristotle and Pascal.

Chevalier was a great admirer of Bergson from the time of his youth. He read Matière et Mémoire in 1898 as a pupil at the Lycée Hoche, Versailles, and later attended the courses at the Collège de France from 1901 onwards (see Entretiens avec Bergson, Lib. Plon, 1959, p. 1). In 1903 he passed his Agrégation de philosophie and went to England. In his own words, "je tiens fidèlement, ainsi qu'il m'avait demandé, mon maître Bergson au courant de mes travaux" (p. 9). In February 1905 Chevalier had a discussion with Bergson and again in June 1907, when they talked about Catholicism and Protestantism. Chevalier thereafter remained a personal friend of Bergson, visiting him often in later life¹. He read E.C. avidly as soon as it was published (1907) and in October 1909 Chevalier became Professeur de philosophie at the Lycée de Chateauroux and submitted a doctoral thesis to the

1. Chevalier, as a Secretary of State for Youth and Education, had the honour of sending Mme. Bergson the condolences of Pétain and the Government in a telegram the day after Bergson's death (see Entretiens, p. 299).

Sorbonne on religious revival in Wales. It was rejected, but he successfully attempted another, on "La notion du nécessaire chez Aristote", this time for the Faculté de Lettres at Lyon. Chevalier eventually became Dean of the Faculté des Lettres at Grenoble (June 1931).

In "le continu et le discontinu" (1926) Chevalier condemns both the static (Zeno's) and the Heraclitic (or Leibniz's) views of the world: "On s'aperçoit partout le continu et le discontinu coexistant" (p. 114). There is not just one type of continuity; nor is there one type of unity. For instance, there is a difference between the continuity of the fundamental self and "la basse continuité homogène de l'espace" (p. 115). After Bergson, Chevalier blames the intellect for confusing the issue. The intellect attributes continuity to the discontinuous - "dans l'évolution, par exemple, ou dans le passage d'une forme à l'autre" (p. 115) - and, vice versa, "elle met la discontinuité là où il y a continuité" (p. 115); for example, between emotional states and between ideas in the mind. In both cases it proves to be incapable of recognizing quality. Another weakness of the intellect in man lies in its creation of an artificial opposition between categories: "à ériger les contraires en contradictaires excluant le milieu, et d'autre part, à étendre à l'univers un résultat partiel par définition" (p. 118, italics in original). Chevalier therefore not only supports implicitly Bergson's anti-intellectualism¹; he extends the critique into other areas of life. Far from being a stumbling-block to Chevalier, Bergson's critique became the gateway to real knowledge of the world. In his Henri Bergson (1926), Chevalier wrote

1. Chevalier does acknowledge Bergson's decisive influence in this matter: "A la suite d'un entretien que j'eus avec Bergson à la fin de 1923, je découvris que cette inversion tient à ce que l'intelligence met la quantité à la place de la qualité" (p. 118).

an appendix (1934 ed., pp. 301-307) entitled "L'Intellectualisme de Bergson", in which he endeavoured to interpret Bergson as a "grand défenseur de l'esprit" (p. 302). If Bergson pointed out the limits and limitations of the discursive intellect, this was in order to break the circle of thesis and antithesis around which the mind moved and in which it was imprisoned. Only through intuitive observation of the particular could the vicious circle be broken.

The discussion continues in La Science et le Réel (Bloud et Gay, 1927). Again following Bergson, Chevalier distinguishes two types of knowledge: "Il y a deux manières de connaître une chose: soit en l'assimilant aux autres choses, soit en s'efforçant de l'appréhender en elle-même" (p. 7). But he gives a new slant to this by blaming Aristotle for elevating the first type, called 'scientific', into the position of the only possible true knowledge:

Il n'ose affirmer l'intelligibilité d'un discontinu individuel ... En tout ordre de connaissance ... c'est l'universel et le nécessaire, ou à défaut le général, qui est seul intelligible; seul explicatif ... (p. 10, italics in original).

Because of this, the known Universe is composed of genres, types, species, laws and, in a word, formal essences.

Chevalier holds that Aristotle excluded knowledge of the individual existent ('le singulier'), but this type of knowledge, he continues, "joue un rôle absolument prépondérant dans la Révélation chrétienne" (p. 13). Why, because "la science sacrée est une science de faits, donc de choses singulières" (p. 13).

It may appear that on both counts Chevalier is contradicting St. Thomas Aquinas. In fact, he is at pains to point out that Aquinas would agree with him in admitting that Intelligence as such can know individuality, but not human intelligence, which is limited to knowledge of 'essences':

"C'est l'intelligence divine qui est la norme de l'intelligence ... l'intellect divin ... est la mesure des choses" (p. 14). "Par là se trouve substitué au primat de l'intelligible, le primat du réel, c'est-à-dire de l'intelligible en soi, de l'intelligible en Dieu" (p. 14). Therefore, "c'est seulement lorsqu'elle se perçoit comme relatif que la pensée peut atteindre l'absolu ..." (p. 4).

This idea, says Chevalier, is the spirit of Thomism, but the letter of it is still Aristotelean. Descartes later emulated Aristotle in giving pre-eminence to the mathematical science of the general law, and this in turn inspired idealism and positivism (see pp. 14-15). The facts of the case are different, though, for the individual is prior to the general in real experience:

Nos sens ne nous livrent jamais que des êtres ou des événements singuliers ..." (p. 16).

One only perceives colour in a particular colour, so "la science 'en acte' porte sur l'individuel" (p. 16). Furthermore, our most immediate apprehension is always of the individual self (p. 16).

Chevalier accepts the paradox that "si les principes sont universels, ils ne sont pas réels, et s'il sont individuels, ils ne sont pas objets de science" (p. 17) and in doing so accepts Aquinas's teaching that reason cannot know the contingent or individual. Yet Chevalier, once again drawing on Bergson, sees an alternative solution to the problem in "une intuition synthétique" in which, "au lieu de réduire les faits aux lois, on fera converger les lois vers le fait, afin de l'éclairer" (p. 33). This inductive method is more effective. Chevalier mentions that he used it in his study of religious awakenings in Wales - "je me suis efforcé d'éclairer à fond un fait singulier, en projetant sur lui toutes les lumières que peuvent fournir les sciences du général" (p. 33). However,

this "intuition" is not the same as Bergson's; it is not of "la qualité sensible" (p. 34) but of "l'individuel-sujet ou esprit, l'idée platonicienne, la puissance dynamique de construction" (pp. 34-35). Whether or not the individual is known in its temporal existence, it can still be studied and analyzed, albeit "à condition de l'introduire dans les formes de l'esprit" (p. 35). The "essence" of the individual is still more significant than the idea of a general species.

Chevalier maintains that Christian philosophy (including St. Thomas's) added a vital new idea to the Aristotelean formulae - that of creation, which brought men back to the study of real life in flux, of events taking place in time. For him, creation is "l'idée d'une source ou origine rationnelle de toute la réalité temporelle et contingente ..." (La science et le réel, p. 12). If Aristotle's God is the prime mover of a world from which he remains aloof, St. Thomas's God sustains and maintains his creation at every moment - he is "le créateur et le conservateur d'un monde qui dépend entièrement de lui pour son être et pour sa subsistance" (Trois Conférences d'Oxford, 1926, Ed. Spes 1933, No. 1 "Aristote et Saint Thomas ou l'Idée de Création", pp. 24-25). The act of creation "se renouvelle tout le long du temps en sorte que le 'point éternel' se traduirait dans le temps par une multiplicité de 'points de durée' ..." (Ibid., No. III, "Newman et la notion de développement", p. 297). If for Aristotle contingency is like a negation of reason and science, for St. Thomas "le contingent n'est qu'une suite et une conséquence de la création: il a sa raison d'être dans la pensée et dans la volonté divines ..." (p. 28). This means that the contingent is eminently rational and not unintelligible at all. But for Aristotle only necessary being could have a 'raison d'être'. This leads to a further conclusion, that "la raison n'apprend et ne progresse qu'en assimilant l'irrationnel, qui n'est irrationnel que par nous et non en soi"

(p. 30).

In suggesting that the contingent was part of the order and harmony of the Universe, Chevalier was echoing Bergson, who, in E.C. (pp. 681-696), had argued that the idea of disorder was simply a mistaken viewpoint. Disorder was another type of order which did not fit in with the expectations of the intellect.

Moreover, Aristotle's God, after his initial creative activity "se repose éternellement en lui-même, et ... n'a nul besoin d'agir", whereas "au Dieu de Saint Thomas, par contre, la vie et l'action conviennent éminemment" (pp. 34-35). This implies that the goal of life is not attained by static meditation but (partly) by the active contemplation of experience. Thus, for Chevalier, St. Thomas was a great innovator, who restored to philosophy "la connaissance par affinité, par connaturalité, par compassion ou sympathie, la connaissance concrète, expérimentale, singulière ..." (p. 36).

In creating a rift between Aristotle and St. Thomas, or between Greek idealism and Christian realism, Chevalier was not only criticizing most of the Thomist interpretations of the previous fifty years, which has assumed a near identity between them¹, but was also following Bergson's lead in envisaging the Greek conception of the world as essentially static and conceptualized. This was in fact the world picture Bergson had set out to refute².

If real time and movement were not completely eliminated from Aristotelean thought, they were no more than concepts, for instead of

1. See, for example, Chevalier's letter to G. Bernoville against Maritain on this subject (1st April 1920, Les Lettres, pp. 89-90) and Maritain's reply, supporting Aristotelianism (pp. 94-109).

2. See E.C., pp. 755-773.

being objects of perception they became objects of thought.

Once perception and the sense of the immediate were restored to philosophy then so would a sense of the presence of God, according to Chevalier:

Il faut donc, avant tout, rendre aux hommes le sentiment de la présence de Dieu ... C'est dire que toute doctrine de transcendance demande à être établie par une méthode d'immanence (Trois Conférences, I, p. 30, italics in original).

This means that the relationship between time and eternity must be an intimate one. Eternity cannot be severed from real time:

Elle n'abolit pas la durée: elle la ramasse éminemment en elle, avec tous ses caractères essentiels d'irréversibilité, d'imprévisibilité, de durée. L'éternité n'est pas la négation de la durée: elle est la durée absolue (Trois Conférences, III, p. 295).

Chevalier's attachment to Bergsonism stemmed from a strong conviction that Bergson's thought was not only metaphysical but fundamentally religious in a real sense. In his book on Bergson he wrote a final chapter on the direction and tendency of Bergson's thought³ and, remarkably enough, predicted some of Bergson's own conclusions in Les Deux Sources (1932). Chevalier realized that Bergson's method was "la métaphysique empirique" (p. 246) and that the clue to understanding lay in analyzing the "moi intérieur" in its profound grasp of life outside itself (see p. 243). This must mean that Bergson would approach God from the point of view of man's consciousness and experience of him. Not only that, but he would see a close identity between moral and spiritual problems, for moral problems are part of the divine life lived through men in the world, rather than pure theories of existence (see pp. 247-248). These tenets were in fact the starting-points for the investigations of Les Deux Sources.

1. "Les Prolongements et la portée de la pensée bergsonienne" (pp. 240 ff.).

Some time later, in L'Histoire de la Pensée, Vol. IV (1966), Chevalier saw, in retrospect, the purpose of Les Deux Sources in these terms:

Il ne s'agit nullement, pour lui, de rendre compte philosophiquement du christianisme, qui est un fait historique et donc une donnée contingente, encore moins de transformer le christianisme en philosophie, mais simplement, conformément à son souci de positivité intégrale, d'inclure le fait chrétien dans son champ d'observation et de chercher quelles conclusions la réflexion sur lui apporte à la philosophie (p. 548).

In this final chapter Chevalier attempts to absolve Bergson of the many accusations against him - of heraclitism, anti-intellectualism, pantheism, evolutionism and monism. In so doing he not only demonstrates his own complete admiration for Bergson's method of enquiry and for many of its achievements, but he also reverses the earlier trend when these very criticisms were coming largely from Catholic sources¹. Les Deux Sources, a work criticized even by Bergson's supporters (like Gilson and Sertillanges), receives great acclaim from Chevalier in an appendix to the 1934 edition of Henri Bergson (written in May 1932), and in speaking about it he sums up what Bergson has meant to him:

Il est impossible de donner en quelques pages une idée de la puissance et de la richesse de ce livre ... Oeuvre maîtresse de philosophie, il couronne son oeuvre entier, l'illumine et l'achève, sans le clore ... Etonnamment significative, efficace et profonde apparaît ... la portée de ce livre si on le prend pour ce qu'il est: je veux dire l'immense effort d'un esprit pour serrer la vérité dans ses implications dernières ... (p. 314).

Chevalier's final comments in this appendix demonstrate clearly how the wheel of Catholic reaction to Bergson had turned full circle:

Saint Thomas ressemble à Aristote par la lettre, et en diffère par l'esprit. Bergson diffère de Saint Thomas par la lettre et il lui ressemble par l'esprit (p. 327).

1. As seen in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER FIVE

BERGSON AND THE FRENCH MODERNISTS

Pope Pius X called Modernism a "synthesis of all the heresies"¹, and yet Bible critics and scholars had received encouragement for their spirit of objective enquiry in Leo XIII's encyclical, 'Providentissimus Deus' in 1893, only fourteen years before the general condemnation of modernist tendencies. The modernist episode is seen by René Marlé as "une crise qui, depuis la Réforme, fut sans doute la plus grave qu'ait traversée la conscience chrétienne"². Bergson's part in Modernism is slight if we are to judge from the chroniclers of the movement. In Jean Riviére's account, Le modernisme dans l'Eglise (Lib. Letouzey et Ané, 1929), Bergson is mentioned just once (p. 205) in a footnote of little import. Both René Marlé and Bernard Reardon (Roman Catholic Modernism, A. & C. Black, London, 1970) ignore Bergson entirely, while Alec Vidler attributes some vague influence to Bergson alongside W. James and E. Boutroux, without making any detailed comments³.

Before examining the tenets and tendencies of the modernists and their relationship to Bergson, a short account of the suppression of the movement will allow the writings to be seen in their historical context. In France, the elimination of Modernism began with the placing of five

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1. In his consistorial allocution on 17th April 1907.
 2. Published in the introduction to Au coeur de la crise moderniste, Aubier, 1960, p. 9.
 3. See p. 186 ff.

books by Alfred Loisy (1857-1940) on the Index¹. In Paris, Cardinal Richard received from Rome a document dated 16th December 1903 and signed by the Pope himself. He published this condemnation in La Croix three days later. Not only were Loisy's works outlawed, but there appeared an attack on his expressed principles and doctrines as well².

Soon afterwards, in 1906, two works by Lucien Laberthonnière (1860-1932) were similarly placed on the Index. These were his Essais de philosophie religieuse (1903) and Le réalisme chrétien et l'idéalisme grec (1904).

The first more general condemnation of Modernism occurred in 1907 with the proclamation of the decree Lamentabili sane exitu on 4th July. This effectively placed a check on the charter for independent intellectual enquiry granted by Providentissimus Deus. In Lamentabili, or, rather, in the attached 'syllabus of errors', 65 propositions about the interpretation of Holy Scripture were condemned. These propositions were ostensibly drawn from the writings of 'Modernists'³.

A second general condemnation followed in the Pope's encyclical letter, Pascendi dominici gregis of 8th September 1907⁴. This charge amounted to an attempt to systematize and enumerate the philosophical principles behind

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1. Namely, La religion d'Israël (1901), Etudes évangéliques (1902), L'Evangile et l'Eglise (1902), Autour d'un petit livre (1903) and Le quatrième évangile (1903).
 2. Concerning such subjects as primitive revelation, the authenticity of evangelical facts and teaching, the divinity and knowledge of Christ, his real resurrection and the divine institution of the Church.
 3. In fact, the majority of these were drawn from Loisy's L'Evangile et l'Eglise (1902) and Autour d'un petit livre (1903).
 4. Long accounts of both publications are to be found in Jean Rivière's Le modernisme dans l'Eglise. Lamentabili is analyzed in Part 4, Chapter I (pp. 329-348), while Pascendi is considered in Part 4, Chapter II (pp. 349-372).

modernist writings. For the first time, the word 'Modernism' received official sanction, at the head of the document. Anyone found to be tainted with modernist views was threatened with exclusion from offices in church government and teaching and also with possible excommunication. Alfred Loisy was fairly soon afterwards excommunicated by name - on 7th March 1908 - so the words proved to be no idle threat.

After this, the campaign became even more personalized, for on 1st September 1910 an anti-modernist oath was introduced - the moto proprio, Sacrorum antistum. All clerics promoted to major orders and all clergy exercising any ministerial function were required to declare, among other things, that the existence of God can be certainly demonstrated by the light of natural reason and that the Church was directly instituted by Christ in his earthly lifetime and to admit the fact of external proofs of revelation, such as miracles and prophecies.

Finally, in 1913, after a long period of threat and uncertainty for him, Laberthonnière's¹ work in Les Annales de Philosophie chrétienne (between 1905 and 1913)² were placed on the Index, together with two further books, Le témoignage des martyrs (1912) and Sur le chemin du catholicisme (1913). Worse than this, Laberthonnière was forbidden to publish anything else in his lifetime³.

The strange fact about Modernism is that it was not conceived as a

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1. Both Blondel and Laberthonnière had been under scrutiny since 1899: see Correspondance philosophique: Blondel - Laberthonnière présentée par Claude Tresmontant (Eds. du Seuil, 1961, p. 136).
 2. His entire period as Editor.
 3. He did, however, publish under friends' names. P. Sanson's L'Inquiétude humaine, for instance, was really written by Laberthonnière (see F. Copleston's A History of Philosophy, Vol. IX, Scarch Press, London, 1975, p. 237, n. 2). This type of prohibition is disciplinary and, unlike indexing, does not involve the teaching authority of the victim.

movement by its proponents until it had been named as one¹. The French modernists - Loisy, Laberthonnière and LeRoy² - did not conspire together as a group with common aims or a common programme of campaign. In fact, they were not personally acquainted, apart from Laberthonnière and Blondel. They were unaware of the fact that they were participating in a movement until the condemnation of that movement.

Modernism was first recognized as a movement by the neo-Thomist philosophers of the Catholic Church. The label 'modernist' was intended by them to describe someone with a certain attitude of mind to the dogma and philosophy of the Church. The opposition to such an attitude began as early as 1896, when the Dominican, M-B. Schwalm (1860-1908), wrote "L'Acte de Foi est-il raisonnable?" in the Revue Thomiste (March) directed against Blondel, who had said that Thomism constituted "une description statique des éléments rationnels et des convenances du dogme" (Annales de Phil. chrétienne, February 1896, No. 4, p. 78). Abbé H. Gayraud³ followed up Schwalm's articles with attacks on Loisy in L'Univers of 1st January 1903 and on Blondel in La Crise de la Foi (published 1901). He also attacked Blondel in La Revue du Clergé français of 15th May 1904, but this time,

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1. Buonauti (1881-1946). an Italian modernist, then adopted the term with pride: see Il programma dei modernisti of 1907.
 2. The justification for calling Blondel a modernist is examined in the next chapter. Rivière states that "rien ne serait plus injuste que de mettre [Blondel] comme on le fait assez communément, au nombre des modernistes" (p. 122). Nevertheless, his L'Action (1893) and Histoire et Dogme (1903) play a central part in the crisis.
 3. Gayraud, Hippolyte, O.P. (1856-1911). Was from 1884 to 1893 Professeur at the Dominican College of Toulouse. From 1890 he held chair in philosophy at the Institut Catholique de Toulouse. Left Dominican order in 1893 to enter politics and in fact became député for Brest in 1897.

rather than Blondel's Lettre ...¹, Histoire et Dogme is envisaged. In the Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique (Toulouse, January-February 1903), Mgr. P. Batiffol compared Blondel with Loisy and accused him of neo-Kantianism. Next, the editor of La Revue du Clergé français, J. Bricout, attacked Blondel's anti-Thomism in articles entitled "Autour des fondements de la foi" (1st February and 1st April 1904). All of these writers regarded as heretical Blondel's and Loisy's lack of confidence in the powers of the intellect alone to reach firm conclusions about the truth of Christian faith and the existence of God. This amounted, in their eyes, to an implicit attack on Thomas Aquinas's 'rational' account of faith.

LeRoy (1870-1954) soon afterwards encountered stiff opposition to his article on faith and dogma in La Quinzaine of 16th April 1905: "Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?". Père Portalié, S.J., attacked his position in "L'Explication morale des dogmes" (Etudes, 20th July and 5th August 1905). A-D. Sertillanges, O.P., took issue with LeRoy's article in L'Enquête de la Quinzaine (1st June 1905), and J. Wehrlé followed suit in the Revue Biblique of July 1905. L. de Grandmaison, S.J., also mounted an assault on LeRoy in the Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique of July-October 1905.

The ground had been well prepared for the encyclical, Pascendi, not only with regard to the names of suspected modernists, but also with regard to the philosophical principles behind modernist thought. It should be emphasized at this point, however, that the dogmatic or exegetical aspects of Modernism were separated from the philosophical principles used

1. i.e., "Lettre sur les exigences de la pensée contemporaine en matière d'apologétique et sur la méthode de la philosophie dans l'étude du problème religieux", Annales de Philosophie chrétienne, 1896.

in support of modernist attitudes¹. The first condemnation of Modernism - in Lamentabili - aimed at charging certain people with false assumptions about Biblical exegesis and dogmatic definition. On the other hand, in the philosophical statement, Pascendi, Pope Pius X assumed in general terms that the modernist errors in any field were directly attributable to false philosophical assumptions. These were listed under such categories as 'phenomenalism', 'evolutionism', 'immanentism' and 'agnosticism'².

It is significant that Pascendi gave pride of place to the philosophical tenets of Modernism because, as Alfred Loisy correctly contended:

On oublie ainsi, dès l'abord, que le mouvement moderniste n'a pas commencé par la philosophie, mais par l'histoire ecclésiastique et, bientôt après, par l'exégèse biblique. (Simplex Reflexions, Nourry, 1908, pp. 143-144).

It is clear that the modernists were imagined to be men with common philosophical premises, whatever their particular area of specialization happened to be. Accordingly, a number of men, including Wehrle and Blondel, working in the philosophical arena exclusively, became implicated in a movement of whose existence they knew nothing. As soon as Modernism entered the realm of philosophy it was presumed to constitute an opposition to neo-Thomism and immediately involved neo-Thomist philosophers in the dispute. The philosophical content of Modernism is in fact a specifically French

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1. This distinction has not been adequately explained by Marlé, Reardon, Rivière or Vidler, the leading chroniclers of Modernism in France. Consequently, its significance has been overlooked and lost.
 2. See Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum by A. Schönmetzer, S.J., Ed. H. Denzinger (Herder, Freiburg, 34th ed. 1967, col. 3475, 3483 ff.). E.g., part of the encyclical reads as follows: "Hic tamen agnosticismus in disciplina modernistarum non nisi ut pars negativis habenda est: positiva, ut aiunt, in immanentia vitali constituitur. Harum nempe ad aliam ex altera sic procedunt" (column 3477). For whole Pascendi section, see pp. 675-683, cols. 3475-3500.

phenomenon, and, even there, is restricted to Blondel, Laberthonnière and LeRoy, among whom only Laberthonnière was condemned, but in fact all of them have a claim to be considered as orthodox, yet independent, Catholics.

In Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange's influential book, Le sens commun, la philosophie de l'être et les formules dogmatiques (Beauchesne, 1909), Bergson and LeRoy are named as the leading lights behind the emergence of the modernist movement. This identification of Bergson with Modernism is of especial importance in pointing to why early reactions to him were generally so unfriendly. Moreover, it served to bring Bergson's philosophy to the attention of modernist writers as a sympathetic thinker. In the long run, it was LeRoy who popularized Bergson's ideas in modernist circles through his continual use of them and through the publication of his Henri Bergson: Une philosophie nouvelle in 1912. In a short space of time, as already seen, Bergson came to be regarded as a heretic and a danger in orthodox quarters.

Pascendi must have supposed all modernists to hold largely similar positions. For instance, one alleged tendency of the modernists was to reduce dogmatic statements to statements requiring verification in experience and action. This 'pragmatic' approach was supposed to reduce knowledge of the supernatural basis of faith to such knowledge as it exists in the human consciousness, or as it is revealed in nature¹. This would assert the primacy of the attested 'fact', whether it be a historical

1. This belief is summarized in Pascendi in the following manner: "Modernistae credenti ratum ac certum est, realitatem divini reapse in se ipsam exsistere nec prorsus a credente pendere. Quod si postules, in quo tandem haec credentis assertio nitatur reponit: in privata cuiusque hominis experientia ... in sensu religioso quendam esse agnoscendum cordis intuitum" (Denzinger, Op. cit., col. 3484).

fact or a fact of consciousness.

It was indeed taken for granted by the modernists in view here that a priori statements about a transcendent reality or supernatural world would not be convincing to modern agnostics, since they could not be experienced or verified in daily life. In the realm of exegesis especially it was deemed essential to restrict oneself to observable phenomena and to omit all fanciful speculation or doctrines which could not find an explanation or echo in any man's everyday experience. This approach would not of necessity preclude the possibility of supernatural or transcendent realities but would itself prefer to limit its enquiries to a narrower field of vision. Alfred Loisy claimed to know:

un nombre assez déterminé de personnes, dont le trait commun est le désir d'adapter la religion catholique aux besoins intellectuels, moraux et sociaux du temps présent (Simple Reflexions, p. 13).

Given these first principles, the philosophical import of Modernism would appear to engage Bergson with his empirical methods. The exegetical or dogmatic import would appear to bypass him, were it not for the fact that LeRoy and Blondel, implicated in 'Bergsonism', both wrote also on faith and dogma¹, and Loisy had close contacts with Bergson after his appointment to teach at the Collège de France from 1909 (-1930).

Edouard LeRoy combined the two major aspects of Modernism - its pragmatic approach to dogma and its method of philosophical immanence - in his article, "Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?" (La Quinzaine, 16th April 1905). Born in 1870, LeRoy succeeded Bergson in teaching philosophy at the Collège de France. LeRoy began this work in 1921 (owing to Bergson's illness) and

1. E.g., Blondel's Histoire et Dogme (1903) and LeRoy's Dogme et Critique (1907).

was formally appointed to his post in 1924. In 1945 he became a member of the Académie des Sciences morales et politiques and of the Académie française. His first work, in 1899, demonstrated his interest in both science and philosophy. After his Dogme et Critique (1906) and the work on Bergson, he developed his own philosophy in such works as Les origines humaines et l'Evolution de l'Intelligence (1928), Le problème de Dieu (1929) and La Pensée Intuitive (1929). Dogme et Critique was placed on the Index in 1907 and Le Problème de Dieu followed in 1930 although LeRoy submitted.

In writing the article, "Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?", LeRoy's aim was to emphasize the role of experience in the life of faith and to draw attention to the fact that faith is most truly a living of one's beliefs. This approach would, in his opinion, do more to convince unbelievers than a logical demonstration of the reasonableness of faith and would, in addition, involve believers in a more devotional way of life:

l'obéissance que nous entendons donner n'est pas une simple obéissance de formules et de gestes; c'est une obéissance profonde, qui nous prenne tout entiers, coeur, volonté, intelligence; en un mot, une obéissance d'hommes raisonnables et d'hommes libres, non d'esclaves et de muets (in Dogme et Critique, Bloud et Cie., 1907, pp. vii-viii).

LeRoy is not content to proceed at once to the positive benefits of such an attitude, but instead, unfortunately for him, chooses to blame scholastics for the lifeless intellectualism prevalent in the church:

Or, on ne saurait nier qu'aujourd'hui l'emploi du langage scolastique soit moins une aide qu'un obstacle ...
Va-t-on prétendre que la terminologie de l'Ecole est indissolublement liée à la raison et à la foi? (p. xi).

On an even more personal and acrimonious note, LeRoy goes on to say that "il y a en effet de certains gens pour qui l'Eglise n'est qu'une hiérarchie, un gouvernement maître absolu de sujets inertes ..." (p. xiii). That LeRoy's criticisms derive from a lively faith and genuine concern for the church and

its mission to the world is beyond dispute, but his provocative and emotional style of writing was bound to meet with disapproval among Thomist philosophers as well as those in authority in the Church.

LeRoy then employs a Bergsonian form of argument to justify his scepticism towards dogmatic formulae. Dogmas are 'choses', he says, whereas experience (which alone counts for modern man) takes account of movement:

L'expérience elle-même n'est point du tout une acquisition de 'choses' qui nous seraient d'abord totalement étrangères; non, mais plutôt un passage de l'implicite à l'explicite (pp. 9-10).

This corresponds to Bergson's account of intuition and its relation to language in "L'Intuition philosophique" (P.M., p. 1358)¹:

La vérité est qu'au-dessus de la phrase il y a quelque chose de beaucoup plus simple qu'une phrase et même qu'un mot: le sens, qui est moins une chose pensée qu'un mouvement de pensée; moins un mouvement qu'une direction ...

LeRoy's philosophy in "Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?" may seem to be a form of nominalism; for, from a position which considers dogmas as being unconvincing for modern man, he moves to a position which regards them as inconceivable and therefore meaningless in themselves. They are not commensurable with a real existence:

Au point de vue strictement intellectuel, les dogmes n'ont, me semble-t-il, qu' [un] sens négatif et prohibitif ... S'ils formulaient la vérité absolue en termes adéquats (à supposer que pareille fiction ait un sens), ils seraient intelligibles pour nous. S'ils ne donnaient qu'une vérité imparfaite, relative et changeante, ils ne pourraient pas légitimement s'imposer (p. 23).

1. LeRoy anticipates Bergson's thought, as this article first emerged in 1911 (Rev. de M.M., November, pp. 809-827).

However, in fact this idea is more akin to Bergson's comments on language in Matière et Mémoire than to any form of nominalism. In particular, LeRoy echoes Bergson's assertion that language cannot be commensurate with any real existent since it provides a fixed concept for that which is in fact changing and in flux:

Toute division de la matière en corps indépendants
aux contours absolument déterminés est une division
artificielle (M.M., p. 332).

LeRoy's main contention is that a dogma has above all a practical sense. Religious dogmas can be interpreted as directives for moral action; for example, "Dieu est personnel" is taken to mean, "comportez-vous dans vos relations avec Dieu comme dans vos relations avec une personne humaine" (pp. 25-26). He similarly explains that the fact of Jesus's resurrection means in practical terms, "soyez par rapport à Lui comme vous auriez été avant sa mort, comme vous êtes vis-à-vis d'un contemporain" (p. 26).

If this were in fact a purely pragmatic approach to doctrine and no more, then LeRoy would be vulnerable to the criticism that to act as though something were true in no way implies that it is true. Behaving according to a set of beliefs does not validate their objective truth. But perhaps it is only by action, by living something out, that one can verify something to one's own satisfaction. A logical or abstract proof is not fully convincing subjectively, however valid it might be objectively. This is what LeRoy is hinting at. He distinguishes between a 'pensée discursive' which arrives at truth through logic and reason and a 'pensée action' which tests a belief in practice. The certainty is then confirmed for the subject:

S'il y a une apparence de pure donnée extérieure, de mystère totalement opaque, de commandement brutal venu du dehors, c'est par rapport à l'entendement discursif. Mais la pensée-action, dont je parlais à l'instant, échappe à cette apparence. Elle dépasse infiniment la pensée purement intellectuelle (p. 30).

It is vital to notice that LeRoy uses the notion of two types of thought or two casts of mind. He does not insist on the rights of 'action' against those of 'thought' but compares 'pensée-action' with 'pensée-discursive'. He is therefore not crudely anti-intellectual but envisages a wider capacity for the intellect than abstraction or logic. And, while it is true to say that Bergson was sceptical about the powers of the intellect to understand life properly, he pointed out the singular efficacy of 'intuition' - another mode of thought - in that area:

en assignant à l'intuition la connaissance de l'esprit, nous ne retirons rien à l'intelligence (P.M., p. 1320).

At the end of "Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?" LeRoy enters the debate over nature and the supernatural. He expresses further dissatisfaction with neo-Thomist fixed categories and once more uses Bergsonian terms in his own argument:

Cette conception médiévale et scolastique de 'nature' appliquée à l'esprit humain, est toute proche, à certains égards, de la conception kantienne. Celle-ci enveloppe le même abus des métaphores spatiales, des divisions et des coupures numériques et géométriques, la même attitude de logicien confiné dans le monde intemporel et immobile des abstractions (p. 61).

He contrasts this static idea with his own, adopted from Bergson¹:

La nature humaine est plus un progrès, un devenir qu'une chose ... Elle n'est pas définissable dans l'intemporel ni dans l'abstrait ... Elle est par essence vie, durée, invention ... (p. 62).

1. Bergson actually said nothing on this specific topic. His conception of nature and the supernatural is not really broached until M.R. (1932), although he was accused of the doctrine of immanence - that is, a denial of God's transcendence or independence from the world. LeRoy's writing is here along the lines of E.C. (1907) which had not then appeared. Thus, LeRoy again anticipates the development of Bergson's thought.

The common bond LeRoy discerns between Thomist and Kantian accounts of 'nature' is that of a closed system. Both parties, due to their premises, are left with equally invalid alternatives with regard to the supernatural:

Ou bien on pose le principe d'immanence; et alors on ne peut que nier radicalement le surnaturel; c'est ce que font les kantiens. Ou bien on admet le surnaturel; et alors on ne peut que rejeter totalement le principe d'immanence: c'est ce que font les scolastiques (p. 61).

The argument then concentrates on the supernatural as observed in nature and in man - that is, on the immanence of God. The irruption of the supernatural into nature is called 'un enrichissement' or 'une importation' (p. 67) and is transcendent only "par rapport à la nature initiale" (p. 67). In other words, LeRoy denies that there is a difference of type between nature and the supernatural; only one of degree. The function of the supernatural is "parfaire la nature, non de l'abolir, de façon qu'il y ait pour nous toujours unité de la vie spirituelle" (p. 67). For LeRoy, the notion of a 'nature séparée' is no more than "une possibilité abstraite et ... une fiction logique" (p. 67)¹.

All this flies in the face of Thomas Aquinas's supporters, who were at pains to render a clear distinction of kind between the natural understanding of God and the teachings from revelation accepted on trust by faith. For the Thomist the break between nature and supernature is clearcut, not a progressive change.

So on two counts LeRoy confronted the neo-Thomist orthodoxy: he first attempted to pour scorn on the idea that faith could be proved by reason alone, and, secondly, he attacked the idea of a supernatural realm separable

1. Henri De Lubac develops this theme in Surnaturel (1942).

from the world of sense experience.

Then in an article in Demain¹ (15th August 1906), entitled "Scolastique et philosophie moderne", LeRoy set out to dismiss the claims of unique authority for the Thomist philosophy by attempting to show that all philosophies are in a process of evolution towards the final truth which could never be encapsulated within any linguistic framework. He favours Bergsonism as the best example of a philosophy which is capable of development, open to new truths. It is not "un système clos et achevé, avec sa réponse toute prête pour toutes les questions" (p. 347). Certain Bergsonian insights could profitably be added to Thomism, for philosophy as a whole "s'accroît par intussusception comme un organisme, non comme un minéral par addition numérique" (p. 348)².

In a later work, Les origines humaines et l'évolution de l'intelligence (Boivin et Cie., 1931 [1st ed. 1928]), LeRoy's ideas on evolution are further elucidated. He imagines evolution as a process of ascent by stages through time. From the 'biosphère' life evolves to the 'noosphère' (consciousness) and then reaches beyond:

Des ébauches d'avenir paraissent discernables, des promesses d'ascension, au delà de la Noosphère a son tour ... ne peut-on prévoir que déjà se prépare un avènement ultérieur: celui de l'intuition spirituelle au sens moral et religieux du mot (p. 336).

The conception of these states owes much to L'Evolution Créatrice. LeRoy's stages differ only slightly from Bergson's; instinctive and inanimate life existing at the first stage, intelligent awareness and interpretation of life at the second level and then spiritual intuition at the third. Bergson

1. Reprinted in Doctrines et Critique.

2. Péguy's influence is here apparent but not acknowledged: see Note sur Descartes ... and Note conjointe sur Bergson ...

would agree that intelligence makes its appearance on earth at a certain point in time, but he differs in describing intuition in terms of a synthesis of instinct and intelligence¹ rather than as a new faculty emerging with the passing of time. Man's spiritual growth is not a temporal phenomenon at all; it is an individual moral choice. This becomes crystal clear in Les Deux Sources (1932). There is no question of twentieth century man being endowed with gifts not possessed by, for instance, the Ancient Greeks or early mystics. Evolution, for Bergson, does not ultimately take place in time, but in a man's own inner life, which can be deepened and extended spiritually.

If LeRoy does not develop his idea of evolution in as subtle a way as Bergson does, nevertheless he does elaborate upon Bergson's analysis of the mind. In his work on Bergson, subtitled Une philosophie nouvelle (Alcan, 1912), he expounds more limpidly than before his ideas on the relationship between mind and life². Much of this work is a straightforward and largely accurate account of Bergson's ideas, but a large section of the book is concerned to salvage Bergson's philosophy and his own from the stigma of anti-intellectualism. LeRoy preoccupies himself with an exposition of the roles of intelligence and intuition in Bergson's system and at last vindicates himself as an 'intellectualist' of the first order. The theme he adopts now is that of an enlarged intelligence enlightened by continuing reflection on experience. In LeRoy's explanation, not only

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1. See E.C., p. 645: "... l'intuition, je veux dire l'instinct devenu désintéressé, conscient de lui-même, capable de réfléchir sur son objet".
 2. LeRoy also pays tribute to his own debt to Bergson: "J'ai trouvé ... dans son oeuvre l'éclatante réalisation d'un pressentiment et d'un désir" (p. iv). LeRoy states that he already had an affinity with such ideas before reading Bergson, however.

does intuition complement intelligence, but it is seen as an extension of the intelligence itself into the realm of real life. If we endeavour to become conscious of the intelligence's normal obsession with practical action, we can consciously reform and reorientate it:

bref que, par un double effort de critique et d'élargissement, [l'esprit] dépasse le sens commun et l'entendement discursif pour revenir à l'intuition pure (p. 19).

It must be the case, argues LeRoy, that intelligence and intuition are different aspects of mind or, in Bergson's terminology, 'conscience'.

This means, for LeRoy, that in Bergsonism:

nous avons ... le spectacle d'une pensée pure en face des choses. Mais c'est une pensée complète, non réduite à quelques fonctions partielles, une pensée assez sûre de sa puissance critique pour ne sacrifier aucune de ses ressources (p. 102).

He describes 'intuition' in more detail in this way:

La tâche propre du philosophe serait de résorber l'intelligence dans l'instinct ou plutôt de réintégrer l'instinct dans l'intelligence, disons mieux: de reconquérir, du centre de l'intelligence, tout ce que celle-ci a dû sacrifier des ressources initiales. En cela consiste le retour au primitif, à l'immédiat, au réel, au vécu. En cela consiste l'intuition (p. 107).

LeRoy also explains definitively how he views 'action' as the 'verification principle' for thought, making explicit what had been somewhat inchoate in "Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?":

Il est certain que l'intelligence discursive et critique, laissée à ses propres forces, demeure enfermée dans un cercle infranchissable. Mais l'action dénonce le cercle. ... Et c'est l'action encore, sous le nom d'expérience, qui écarte le danger d'illusion ou de vertige, c'est l'action qui vérifie ... (p. 108).

For Bergson, action is normally associated with the discursive intellect and not with intuition. It seems to be the reverse in LeRoy's work, but, in

spite of the confusion over vocabulary, Bergson's and LeRoy's ideas are alike. LeRoy conceived 'la pensée-discursive' as a narrow, limited way of thinking, whereas 'la pensée-action' envisages and interprets the continuing experiences in the mind which is constantly face to face with existence and re-creates it ideologically. So, for LeRoy, Bergson has contributed to a new intellectualism, because his method of returning to the source or origin of all thought by analyzing the raw data of consciousness is the basis for all sound philosophical method. LeRoy explains his opinion as follows:

La pensée qui préside spontanément à la perception sensible, à l'enquête scientifique, à la création d'art, à l'organisation morale et sociale de la vie, est une pensée directe, naïve, pratique, tournée vers les choses, amie des résultats qui part de principes adoptés d'instinct (La pensée intuitive, Boivin et Cie., 1929, pp. 8-9).

For this reason, as in Bergson's system, science or experiment is essential to assist and guide the process of thought. For LeRoy, science is "un fruit de l'expérience fécondée par le raisonnement ... elle procède surtout par analyse" (pp. 11-12). This sentiment is echoed by Bergson in "La philosophie de Claude Bernard":

Le fait, plus ou moins clairement aperçu, suggère l'idée d'une explication; cette idée, le savant demande à l'expérience de la confirmer; mais, tout le temps que son expérience dure, il doit se tenir prêt à abandonner son hypothèse ou à la remodeler sur les faits. La recherche scientifique est donc un dialogue entre l'esprit et la nature (P.M., p. 1434).

In his later works, LeRoy dwells at length on the subject of intuition. For him, 'intuition' is a method which probes deep into the nature of existence through contemplation and action. He regards his own philosophy as a prolonged analysis of a primary intuition. LeRoy's simple spiritual insight is this: that through intuition our thought (enriched by action or experience) is in touch with the Thought behind all creation. God is

'la pensée-action' par excellence. This leads directly to the view that metaphysics is a more profound vision of reality: "Ainsi orientée, la Métaphysique représente un effort de vue directe et profonde, par delà tous les symboles" (La pensée intuitive, p. 25), or again:

notre idéal serait de convertir toute conception en perception. Dès lors, ne doit-on pas définir la Philosophie ... comme un effort pour dilater et intensifier notre puissance perceptive jusqu'à la rendre capable de saisir d'une seule vue immédiate toute richesse et toute profondeur de réalité (p. 27).

As intuition moulds itself to the moving flux of life it regains contact with the process of bringing to life and coming to life - that is, the process of creation. This intuition is psychical or spiritual. LeRoy accepts from Bergson that spirit gives life and matter is the débris of that process, but LeRoy identifies spirit with Thought in a way that is foreign to Bergson. From the Bergsonian position that intelligence marks the superiority of man, LeRoy goes beyond explicit Bergsonism to see life as "l'histoire d'une concentration et libération de pensée" (Les origines humaines et l'évolution de l'intelligence, Boivin et Cie., 1931 [1st ed. 1928], p. 84). The framework of Bergsonism is taken for granted, but Bergson's schema is transcended in this vital aspect; that life is not only a purposive process but is the intricate expression of a superior Intelligence¹:

La victoire de la vie sur l'improbable s'achève au moment où l'intelligence éclot ... (p. 103).

La vie est conscience dès l'origine, conscience diffuse qui peu à peu se concentre, s'intensifie; et toute conscience enveloppe un germe de réflexion naissante ... (p. 201).

1. Bergson associates life with consciousness, not with Thought or Intelligence as such.

In La Pensée Intuitive, LeRoy does not outline three stages of thought as emerging chronologically, as he does in Les Origines Humaines. The three stages - instinct, intelligence and intuition - do recur, but are now simply aspects of mind and not part of an evolutionary process. Instinct has become "le sens commun, qui se borne à une perception utilitaire du réel ..."; intelligence has become "la science, qui entreprend l'analyse méthodique du donné pour en dresser un inventaire à la fois complet et intelligible ..." and, finally, intuition is exercised by "la philosophie" which "s'attache à obtenir de l'univers physique et moral une intuition d'ensemble absolument vraie où soit située toute chose et toute action à son juste rang dans une hiérarchie de valeurs" (all p. 41).

The moral realm stands above the intelligent and instinctive ones - as outlined by Pascal in Pensées¹ - but all three participate in the fullness of "La Pensée Vivante" (p. 41). In his mature philosophy, LeRoy reaches beyond Bergson's conclusions to a Platonist notion of Thought as the principle of life. In the human consciousness this corresponds to 'l'idée', whereas the static intelligence artificially composes 'le concept'. The term 'idée' corresponds to Bergson's 'schéma dynamique' or primary intuition²:

Idée ... quand on l'oppose à Concept ... serait plutôt le mot convenable pour désigner un principe directeur, un sens et un élan de conceptualisation, bref un projet qui oriente une recherche et qu'on laisse ouvert et souple (p. 55).

The idea of God as pure and infinite Thought - the purpose and reason behind

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1. Pascal's influence on LeRoy can be traced in, e.g., Le Problème de Dieu, pp. 137-154, 167-168.
 2. Outlined by Bergson in "L'Effort intellectuel" (E.S., pp. 945-949).

all creation - is explored in Le Problème de Dieu (L'Artisan du Livre, 1929). LeRoy's argument, borrowed from Bergson, is that St. Thomas mistakes movement for states of being: "Le devenir est défini comme transformation, c'est-à-dire passage d'une forme à une autre; mais les deux formes sont conçues statiquement chacune à part ..." (p. 19). The 'unmoved mover' is a static fiction leading to "une fin également immobile" (p. 20). In short, all the rational 'proofs' of God's existence have the aim of showing that "Dieu n'a pas le droit logique de n'exister pas" (p. 82). "Dédire Dieu équivaut à le nier" (p. 83). To affirm God is to recognize a presence and not to admit the correctness of a theory:

une chose est affirmée réelle autant qu'elle se manifeste comme une présence inévitable et autant qu'elle offre de connexions avec le système intégral de la pensée et de la vie (p. 104, italics in original).

In addition, to affirm God is to affirm a moral structure to the Universe: "affirmer Dieu, c'est essentiellement affirmer le primat de la réalité morale" (p. 107). The moral order of the Universe is the effect of divine Intelligence. The connection between moral reality and God is not conceived by the discursive intelligence which pieces together a priori concepts; it is to be deduced from the intelligibility of experience and from the fact of purpose in evolution. In other words, moral values and order point to a Thought in and behind creation - 'la pensée-action'. LeRoy likens this - on a generous interpretation - to Bergson's 'élan vital':

La pensée dont il va être question, c'est la pensée en tant qu'activité créatrice, la même qui se manifeste à la fin et au commencement de son histoire dans l'invention géniale et dans l'évolution biologique, bref la pensée-action. L'intelligence pure, en faculté de réflexion critique, d'analyse conceptuelle, n'en est qu'une forme, une fonction (p. 108).

Cet élan vital, c'est cela même que je considère ici

sous le nom de pensée-action (p. 109).

The fundamental intellectualism of LeRoy links him with his adversaries, Jacques Maritain and Thomas Aquinas. Paradoxically, for all of them, facts have no existence without their 'raison d'être', their meaning. LeRoy argues that it is impossible "d'attribuer à la matière une base d'existence radicalement extérieure, hétérogène, irréductible à la pensée" (pp. 11-12). He also says that "les faits n'ont de sens, ils ne sont pas saisissables que par insertion dans un système" (p. 112). LeRoy's cosmic finalism also demonstrates the purpose behind life: "le devenir cosmique est orienté dans un sens défini" (p. 115). Therefore, LeRoy regards life as the history of 'la pensée créatrice' (p. 116) insofar as evolution is an awakening of Intelligence and is the outworking of God's plans. This intellectualism has nothing to do with the notion that systems of thought can be tailored to fit reality, nor with the view that the human mind can 'understand' God or prove his existence. There is a Thought which is life and a thought which detaches itself from and reasons about life. Bearing in mind the first, LeRoy can say:

Vivre, donc, c'est croire en Dieu; et connaître Dieu
c'est prendre conscience, en l'agissant, de ce qu'enveloppe
le fait de vivre une vie humaine (p. 250).

LeRoy has been considered at some length because he is the Catholic philosopher who comes closest to liberating Bergson from the taint of pragmatism and anti-intellectualism. He also tries to adapt Bergsonism to a Christian world view and succeeds in creating an Idealism which is coherent and at many points convincing. LeRoy's originality and ingenuity are as self-evident as his sincerity. His development of the themes of Thought and Action take him far beyond a mere imitation or reiteration of Bergson's philosophy. In attributing some of his own insights to Bergson, LeRoy

diverted attention from himself rather too modestly. He did not swallow Bergsonism undigested but altered and adapted it a great deal. LeRoy's opposition to a Thomism of a certain type led to his implication in modernism and largely brought about his condemnation. However, his criticisms, as shown, were by no means entirely unjustified.

Lucien Laberthonnière (1860-1932) is unlike LeRoy in that he admits few debts. He is far from acknowledging Bergson's influence on himself, even though it exists. Rather, he revels in antagonism to virtually every philosophy but his own and proudly upholds his own independence. The only philosophers he admits to admiring are St. Augustine, Boutroux, Maine de Biran and the early Blondel¹. Having said that, it is also true to say that Laberthonnière developed his own ideas through dialogue with other philosophers. With regard to Bergson, Laberthonnière wrote:

Je m'oppose au bergsonisme aussi radicalement que je m'oppose à l'aristotélo-thomisme, et pour la même raison: parce que tout en étant contraires, ils comportent également une théorie de l'individuation qui méconnaît et qui nie en fin de compte toute consistance, toute réalité ontologique, toute valeur aux individus que nous sommes (Esquisse d'une philosophie personnaliste, IIIe partie, p. 312).

Laberthonnière attended the Grand Séminaire de Bourges and entered the congrégation de l'Oratoire de France in 1886. He then taught at Juilly and the Ecole Massillon as Professor of philosophy (1896-1900). In 1900 he was appointed Rector of the Collège de Juilly and was offered the editorship of Les Annales de Philosophie chrétienne, which Blondel had

1. Laberthonnière was very impressed with L'Action (1893): "Depuis six mois, malgré une tâche absorbante ... je puis dire que j'ai vécu de votre livre" (Corres. philosophique with Blondel, Eds. du Seuil, 1961, p. 70). He named Boutroux and Maine de Biran as influences according to W. Horton (The philosophy of Abbé Bautain, p. 293) and acknowledges St. Augustine in Le réalisme chrétien, p. 56.

bought in 1905. Laberthonnière worked on the Annales from 1905 to 1913 and was forbidden to publish anything further after that date. His literary executor, Louis Canet, set about publishing his complete works after his death (from 1935 onwards). Of these, Volumes I and II¹ were placed on the Index in 1936 and Volume III² followed suit in 1941³.

Laberthonnière's anti-Thomism was not only direct and uncompromising - he delighted in contradicting St. Thomas - but it also took the form of an anti-rationalism, which should be distinguished from anti-intellectualism as such. As Claude Tresmontant rightly assessed:

La critique de 'l'intellectualisme' chez Laberthonnière n'est évidemment en aucune manière une dépréciation de la pensée et de l'intelligence, mais la critique du sophisme qui tente de dissocier la fonction de l'intelligence de la totalité humaine (Corres. phil. Blondel-Laberthonnière, Eds. du Seuil, 1961, p. 14; Tresmontant edited the correspondence and wrote the introduction).

Venturing further than LeRoy, Laberthonnière will not admit that Christianity has any real influence as a logical argument:

Il n'y a pas d'erreurs opposées au Christianisme que les théologiens n'aient écrasées maintes fois de leurs arguments. Mais un triomphe logique n'est pas un triomphe réel; et, quand on se contente de triompher ainsi dans l'abstrait, on ne change rien à ce qui est (in Laberthonnière: L'homme et l'œuvre ... Textes et Communications présentés par Paul Beillevert, Beauchesne, 1972, p. 175).

Laberthonnière does not intend to substitute a wider 'intellectualism' for a narrower one, after the fashion of LeRoy. He is convinced that all

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1. Etudes sur Descartes (1935), 2 vols.
 2. Etudes de philosophie cartésienne et premiers écrits philosophiques (1938).
 3. There are works on Laberthonnière by E. Castelli (Essai sur la philosophie du Père Laberthonnière, Milan, 1927), P. Beillevert (Laberthonnière: L'homme et l'œuvre, Beauchesne, 1972) and others.

'intellectualisms' and all ideologies are to be rejected and surpassed.

In Le dogmatisme moral (written in 1898, first published by Lethiellieux in 1903), Laberthonnière enumerates three stages of awareness. The first he calls 'le dogmatisme empirique', which regards sense phenomena as the total reality; the second is 'le dogmatisme intellectualiste', which views the intelligibility of external phenomena as the primary fact about life (meaning that the way to increase knowledge is therefore through contemplation of Order in the world). Finally, he posits a third stage, which he calls 'le dogmatisme moral'. In this domain, truth is not attained by logic or any intellectual process, but rather by a purification of the will; by a moral refinement. In order to grasp the truth about anything profoundly:

on ne peut y arriver que par des procédés moraux.
Toutefois ces procédés moraux n'excluent pas du
tout en tant s'en faut les procédés logiques!
Mais ils les dominent en les englobant. La
-logique est un instrument au service de la moralité
(in Le réalisme chrétien précédé d'Essais de Philo-
sophie religieuse, Eds. du Seuil, 1966, p. 50).

The only worthwhile dogmatism is moral dogmatism; intellectual belief alone is dead, whereas "la vérité n'est pas dans la mort, elle est dans la vie" (p. 53). "Croire à une chose, c'est vouloir être et vouloir vivre par elle" (p. 50).

This point of view clearly has certain affinities with LeRoy's, such as the claim that truth is known in life through action and not purely through reason. There is nevertheless a clear difference between the two; in that Laberthonnière speaks of the necessity for an act of will to guide the mind rightly to truth: "Pour aller à la vérité nous avons donc à nous mouvoir du dedans, afin de nous transformer et de nous dépasser" (p. 53). With LeRoy it is a transfer from contemplation of theories to contemplation of experience that rectifies the intellect. In Laberthonnière

truth is seen as reality making contact with the whole person, and not the other way round. The truth itself is making a demand, requiring a response, providing a choice:

Par la vraie critique on est toujours disposé à douter de soi, à se défier de soi pour ne pas faire obstacle à l'avènement de la vérité (p. 54).

This line of approach is very evidently Augustinian, and Laberthonnière himself acknowledges this (see p. 56). The natural and necessary condition of such an approach is the assertion that Christianity is the only reality. It has no need of other systems of thought. Insofar as they are not Christian, they are false and depart from reality. In this respect Laberthonnière resembles Tertullian, who likewise rejected pagan philosophies in their entirety as being inimical to Christian viewpoints. God is thus equated with reality or Truth in Laberthonnière: "Tout être dans son fond est affirmé par Dieu, posé par Lui; c'est un acte de Dieu" (p. 81).

This approach puts Laberthonnière at enmity with most philosophies, and in particular with St. Thomas Aquinas's, which is a synthesis of many elements, and particularly an adaptation of Aristotle's pagan thought-forms. Non-Christian philosophies are considered to be mere collections of ideas; for example:

Les idéalistes, par une élaboration des données de l'expérience, font du monde un système d'idées; et c'est dans ce système d'idées et par lui qu'ils cherchent à se fixer (p. 68, italics in original).

This idea of a conflict between Christianity and all other philosophies is proclaimed more insistently in Le réalisme chrétien et l'idéalisme grec (Lethiellieux, 1904), where Greek philosophy represents the world of ideas and Christian thought is earthed in and corresponds to reality. There is a further implication in this; that St. Thomas is a falsifier of Christianity

in the extent to which he models his philosophy on Aristotle rather than on the Scriptures. The discord between Greek and Christian thought is characterized as "le conflit de la raison et la foi, de la science et de la religion" (p. 5). This is not really restricted to Greek thought but, "s'est renouvelé à travers les âges, s'est perpétué jusqu'à nous; il continue de sévir avec plus d'acuité que jamais" (p. 5), so much so that "la philosophie grecque a joué un rôle considérable dans la systématisation doctrinale du christianisme" (p. 6). Laberthonnière leaves us in no doubt about his position:

... malgré les emprunts que les docteurs chrétiens ont fait à sa terminologie et à ses concepts, nous avons hâte d'ajouter qu'elle n'en est pas moins, en tant que doctrine exprimée et remplacée dans son milieu, en opposition radicale avec le christianisme (p. 93, italics in original).

This idea reverberates throughout Laberthonnière's work. To take one further example, in Esquisse d'une philosophie personnaliste (Lib. Vrin, 1942) he wrote:

Saint Thomas, en mettant le Christianisme dans le moule de l'aristotélisme, n'a pas baptisé Aristote comme on l'a dit: il a aristotélisé le Christianisme. Dans la lettre de l'Evangile il a introduit la conception païenne du monde et de la vie (p. 643).

The grounds on which Laberthonnière criticizes Greek philosophy are very similar to Bergson's. Firstly, the Greeks are 'intellectualist' in the sense that their thought is detached from life and coheres only in relationships between ideas. The world of ideas is naturally opposed to the world of experience:

Au-dessus de la réalité de l'expérience, formant avec elle un dualisme irréductible, c'est un autre monde qu'ils conçoivent, un monde d'idées où l'universel seul a droit de cité (Le Réalisme chrétien, p. 16).

Secondly, the Greeks failed, through this very 'intellectualism', to grasp

the flux of the real world: real time "ne peut être appréhendée par l'esprit parce qu'elle est incessamment fuyante et infiniment multipliée, ils substituent donc par abstraction les idées des choses et des êtres" (p. 15). Even worse, Greek thought actually excludes and abhors movement: "le procédé de la philosophie grecque est un artifice pour fixer ce qui par nature est toujours en mouvement et pour unifier ce qui est essentiellement multiple" (p. 24).

Are these ideas derived from Bergson? They make similar points to Bergson's in L'Evolution Créatrice (see pp. 761-769), but then this work was not published until 1907, three years after Laberthonnière's. However, Laberthonnière was acquainted with Bergson's work (and LeRoy's) much earlier. He discussed their work with Blondel in 1905 (see Correspondance philosophique, pp. 187-195) and it was on Laberthonnière's recommendation that Blondel read Bergson for the first time in 1897 (see Id., p. 110). There was some correspondence between Bergson and Laberthonnière in 1903. In a letter to Blondel, Laberthonnière wrote:

J'ai regu un mot de Bergson qui me dit que l'idée qui m'a inspiré dans Le Dogmatisme Moral lui paraît devoir être le point de départ de toute métaphysique positive (p. 169).

In 1909 Laberthonnière held a long discussion with Bergson (mentioned in a letter to Blondel of 3rd January 1909, p. 218). So it is clear that by 1904 Laberthonnière was interested in Bergson's thought and had grasped the importance of time and movement in his philosophy.

There is a final criticism of Greek philosophy in Le Réalisme chrétien - and this idea was to bear much fruit in Laberthonnière's later personalism - that the individual, the particular and the exceptional proved to be an embarrassment to Greek philosophers, whose certain conclusions rested upon universals:

Il n'a pas de science du particulier, de l'individuel.
Le monde sensible est objet d'opinion ou de conjecture,
mais non de certitude et d'affirmation (p. 19).

Christianity has an internal unity and logical coherence of its own: "La Bible est donc essentiellement une explication: elle exprime une conception de la vie et du monde" (Le Réalisme chrétien, p. 40). If external ideas are imposed upon it from outside, its unity "est alors purement abstraite" (p. 48). The facts of Christianity are to be understood and interpreted from the inside: "par interprétation on les voit du dedans, dans l'acte vital d'où ils émanent et dans l'intention qui ... les relie les uns aux autres" (p. 48). Internal unity is 'concrete', derived from the life of the subject. It hardly needs pointing out that such an idea was first and best expressed by Bergson in his early works¹ and especially in the article "Introduction à la Métaphysique" (1903). There, the unity of the personality is understood internally in terms of intensity, quality and direction, whereas it is misunderstood by any external analysis of its component parts.

It is interesting to note that Laberthonnière admired L'Essai more than any of Bergson's other works. He argues in Esquisse d'une philosophie personnaliste that the alternative to a world of forms and things is a world of 'êtres', beings - "considérés comme des intériorités qui existent, non seulement en elles-mêmes, mais aussi par elles-mêmes" (p. 309). He considers that in L'Essai Bergson accorded with this viewpoint, but later departed from it (in E.C.):

... en définitive, par ses critiques et ses analyses, du

1. The best expression of Bergson's theory is to be found in his lectures on "Personality" at the Collège de France in 1910-1911 (Mélanges, pp. 843-847) and in the Edinburgh Gifford lectures (21st April-22nd May 1914) (Mélanges, pp. 1051-1086).

reste si remarquablement pénétrantes, il [Bergson] ne tendait qu'à se débarrasser du physicisme mécaniste de Taine, de Haeckel, de Spencer, etc. ... pour y substituer un biologisme d'apparence finaliste où la vie, prise comme principe d'organisation extérieure, et non comme intériorité morale et spirituelle, est mise au premier plan, et la matière brute au second comme dérivée (Esquisse d'une philosophie personnaliste, pp. 297-298, n. 2).

Bergson's earlier attitude Laberthonnière also locates in L'Energie Spirituelle: "Je sais bien," says Laberthonnière, "que dans l'Energie Spirituelle [Bergson] semble parfois considérer la vie de l'individu comme ayant une fin qui déborde l'organisme qu'elle se donne" (Id., p. 298, n. 2). Bergson does not develop his rudimentary personalism, according to Laberthonnière, but instead relapses into a general concern with species and universals and indifference to the plight and destiny of the individual.

Laberthonnière's own personalism involves the conviction that not only is man the highest evolutionary form; not only is he different from the rest of creation, but also all men differ radically from one another. Men cannot be understood as a homogeneous block. This would amount to treating them "abstraitemment, dans ce qu'ils ont de commun entre eux", whereas they should be treated as individuals:

en les posant comme étant des êtres par leur intériorité consciente elle-même, chacun dans leur unicité et dans la complexité de vie qui vient sourdre en eux. Il s'agit donc là d'une conception par interprétation, et non d'une conception d'abstraction ... (p. 305, italics in original).

It is arguable that Bergson might have sympathized with Laberthonnière's ideas and that Laberthonnière's evaluation of L'Evolution Créatrice was harsh. In L'Essai, Bergson is at pains to demonstrate the irreducibility of the self to number or quantity. His whole thesis is an attempt to prove the reality of individual liberty and self-determination. The riches of the profound self show the value of the individual. And later, in his writing on morality

and religion, Bergson unequivocally portrays man not only as an end in himself, but as worthy of participation in the godhead. Laberthonnière read Les Deux Sources at the very end of his life, but still remained hostile in his reaction¹:

... il semble que Dieu fabrique avec nous des dieux par le moyen d'une machine qu'il a construite exprès pour cela. Ce qui est du finalisme tout semblable à celui que Bergson a exorcisé. Mais en même temps, étant donné qu'il fait appel à notre initiative, l'univers est présenté comme une machine qui est mise à notre disposition pour que par elle nous fassions des dieux. L'idée que nous avons à agir Dieu n'apparaît pas plus d'une manière que de l'autre (p. 644).

It could well be that Laberthonnière imagined that mysticism and Christianity were in danger of corruption by foreign elements from Bergsonian philosophy. He makes this clear in his comments on LeRoy, which otherwise are surprisingly favourable:

Pour LeRoy l'élan vital est l'agent de Dieu qui travaille en ce monde pour la fin que Dieu lui a imposée, qui est de faire monter la vie vers l'homme. Les individus que nous sommes deviennent ainsi la fin dont l'élan vital est le moyen: ... ce n'est plus du bergsonisme, mais on conçoit que de cette façon le Christianisme peut être professé sincèrement. Seulement mieux vaudrait se débarrasser du bergsonisme. Le Christianisme se suffit à lui-même (p. 643).

So Laberthonnière's final attitude to Bergson is antagonistic and uncompromising. The use he made of L'Essai and of L'Energie Spirituelle in the determination of his own philosophy of personalism contrasts with his hostility towards L'Evolution Créatrice and Les Deux Sources. He was undoubtedly indebted to Bergson in his own critiques of Greek philosophy, rationalism, idealism, positivism and Thomas Aquinas's 'intellectualism'. The positive side of his thought had many original elements, such as the

1. This is inserted into Esquisse d'une philosophie personnaliste by the editor, Louis Canet (p. 644).

concentration on the value of the individual¹ and of personal relationships. The highest expression of this is to be found in man's - or a man's - relationship with the supreme man, Jesus Christ. In this relationship Christianity itself becomes a form of personalism.. The gulf between man and God is bridged in the incarnation and divinity is to be found in life's every-day experiences, to be achieved "par le contact toujours renouvelé avec Celui qui fut l'Homme" (La Notion chrétienne de l'autorité, J. Vrin, 1955, p. 220).

The question of Laberthonnière's orthodoxy is not germane to this discussion, but A. Vidler's sweeping view that Laberthonnière and LeRoy "urged such a revision of dogma as would make it compatible with the conclusions of modern biblical and historical criticism" (The Modernist movement in the Roman Church, p. 187) is quite misleading. The aim was not, as he implies, to alter and rewrite dogma and doctrine. Rather, both saw that words of any kind were inadequate to express supernatural realities and they also stressed the importance of a reorientation of the will towards God in order to cleanse the mind and prepare it to grasp the truth.

The case of Alfred Loisy (1857-1940) is altogether different. His exegetical principles led him to take up a position of hostility not only to Thomism but also to traditional doctrine and dogma. In fact, his primary obsession was that the dogmas of the Bible and Church were unjustifiable additions to the primitive data of history: "Il ne s'agit plus de savoir si la Bible contient des erreurs, mais bien de savoir ce que la Bible contient de vérité" (Etudes bibliques, Nourry, 3rd Ed. 1903, p. 146). Loisy was essentially a man without belief in Christ's divinity and at times little

1. An idea taken up later by G. Marcel and E. Mounier, among others.

faith in a transcendent God¹.

Educated at Châlons-sur-Marne and the Institut Catholique, Paris, Loisy entered the priesthood in 1879 and became a country curé at Landricourt. Mgr. Louis Duchêsne, prelate of the Académie française, persuaded him back to Paris to pursue historical studies. By 1886 his faith had undergone severe strain, yet in 1890 he accepted the post of Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Institut Catholique. By 1893 his orthodoxy was considered suspect and he was dismissed and urged to confine himself to the study of oriental languages. Between 1894 and 1896 Loisy acted as chaplain to the Convent and School at Neuilly. He was then appointed as Professor of Assyriology and Egyptology at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in 1900. In 1902 his famous L'Evangile et l'Eglise was published as a Catholic reply to A. Harnack's Wesen des Christentums (1900). The following year Loisy expounded the philosophy behind this work in Autour d'un petit livre and also published Le Quatrième Evangile. — Pius X intervened and, through Cardinal Merry Del Val, indexed all of Loisy's extant works (16th December 1903). Loisy's Simplex Réflexions (1908) and Les Evangiles Synoptiques (2 vols., 1907-1908) brought about his excommunication on 7th March 1908. From 1909 until his retirement in 1930 Loisy followed Renan by becoming Professor of the History of Religions at the Collège de France².

Loisy's L'Evangile et l'Eglise is primarily an attack on liberal

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1. He appeared to rediscover this faith later in life: see, e.g., Y a-t-il deux Sources (Nourry, 1933).
 2. Biographies on Loisy include P. Lagrange's M. Loisy et le modernisme (1932), A. Houtin and P. Sartiaux's Alfred Loisy: sa vie, son oeuvre (1960) and R. de Boyer de Sainte Suzanne's Alfred Loisy entre la foi et l'incrédulité (1968). Loisy's autobiography is recounted in Mémoires (3 vols., 1930-1931) and Choses passées (1913).

Protestantism and argues in favour of the Catholic Church as the receptacle of the body of tradition. But, in addition, he calls for reform of exegetical method and of the official theology and dogma in the Church. He made a distinction between historical facts and the stories of the Gospels, most importantly limiting Christ's knowledge to the purely human. In other words, Christ knew nothing of his divine mission and did not institute a Church.

Loisy was an admirer of E. Renan and his attitude to the Church resembled Renan's:

La doctrine catholique ... est un édifice régulier dont toutes les parties s'appuient mutuellement, splendide cathédrale dont le défaut essentiel, comme le disait Renan, est l'insuffisance des fondations (Choses passées, Minerva GMBH, 1913, p. 28).

He followed Renan's lectures at the Collège de France assiduously between 1882 and 1885 and said of him: "A aucun titre je ne prétendais être son successeur; mais il pouvait m'être un modèle utile à suivre en beaucoup de choses" (p. 373). Further, Loisy adopted Renan's 'idée maîtresse', which he explains as follows:

Comme philosophe, Renan estimait que ce qu'il y a de plus consistant dans la religion est l'idéal moral qu'elle soutient, et que cet idéal, toujours perfectible, est immortel (p. 374).

Renan's respect for the positive sciences, and belief that all knowledge could be rendered by them, also influenced Loisy. His reason for doubting the testimonies of St. Augustine, Pascal and Bossuet was because "ces hommes éminents n'avaient pas vécu au XIXe siècle, et ... on savait pas du tout comment aurait pu tourner un Blaise Pascal contemporain d'Ernest Renan" (p. 37).

Loisy's opposition to Thomas Aquinas was a matter of temperament rather than reasoned logic; in his own words, studies in Thomism "me

firent l'effet d'une vaste logomachie" (p. 43). In truth, Loisy's taste and capacity for abstract ideas was limited. He himself admitted that:

Je répugne à l'idéologie, aux spéculations creuses, à la scolastique embroussaillée qui s'efforce à sauver de vieilles formules en les sondant vaille que vaille aux données de l'expérience (Mémoires, III, Nourry, 1931, pp. 366-367).

He did respect 'scientific' reasoning, based on the experimental method, but disliked 'metaphysical' reasoning:

Je goûte fort les essais de philosophie scientifique, de spéculation savante (Ibid.).

Loisy wrote to LeRoy about his article "Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?" on 9th May 1907. After initial compliments, he went on:

Votre doctrine de la résurrection est un beau poème: est-ce autre chose qu'un poème? Votre philosophie de la connaissance est d'un grand intérêt; est-ce autre chose qu'un brillant essai, peut-être un système, dont il ne faudrait pas trop faire dépendre les croyances morales? ... Mais défions-nous de reconstituer, en la baptisant philosophie de l'action, une métaphysique moins logiquement déduite mais plus obscure que l'ancienne (Mémoires, II, p. 521).

Later, he simply dismisses LeRoy's philosophy as "un beau poème" (p. 62C)¹.

Loisy also read Laberthonnière's Le Réalisme chrétien but, here again, he disliked any metaphysical assertions in it:

Cela prouve que la foi est la foi et la science est la science, mais non pas que l'une soit plus vraie que l'autre, ni surtout ... que la foi soit autorisée à conclure ... à la réalité physique et matérielle de données telles que la conception virginale et la résurrection du Christ (Mémoires, III, Nourry, 1931, p. 307).

1. This article was recommended to Loisy by Von Hügel. He met LeRoy and Laberthonnière (with Jacques Chevalier) just once on 12th April 1907 at LeRoy's home (see Mémoires, II, p. 517, and Quelques Lettres sur des questions actuelles, Ceffonds, Haute Marne, 1908, pp. 75-76). Further letters to LeRoy are reprinted in the last-named work.

Loisy's real affinity is with the positivists¹. Like them, he sees an antithesis between the data of faith and science:

Cette antithèse absolue de la science et de la théologie est expressément affirmée dans l'Encyclique²: 'Qu'à cette nouvelle science faussement nommée on oppose cette (science) ontique et vraie que l'Eglise a reçue du Christ par les apôtres'. - Ainsi Jésus a transmis à ses disciples et par eux à l'Eglise, à l'Eglise romaine, une science supérieure à toute science (p. 303).

Loisy's attitude to Bergson is ambivalent. He liked him for his 'positivism' his scientific analysis of sense data - and also because in place of dogma he placed the movement and mystery of life:

J'admire très sincèrement Bergson, parce qu'il a fait un chef d'oeuvre, l'Evolution Créatrice, en tâchant de saisir le mouvement vital de l'univers. Oui cela est très beau, beau de puissance et de sincérité, beau parce que Bergson ne dogmatise pas ... Toute philosophie vraie n'est qu'un essai (Mémoires, III, pp. 366-367, June 1918).

Loisy came to dislike Bergson's metaphysical flights and his specific conclusions about the nature of the Universe. Bergson, for his part, thought that Loisy lacked a sense of the divine: "ce sens manque entièrement, il semble, à Loisy" (Entretiens avec Bergson, J. Chevalier, Plon, 1959, p. 190). Bergson's view is not really accurate, for Loisy did indeed have a sense of the mystery of life and the idea of a world soul in a process of becoming held some appeal for him; he was a thorough-going progressivist in his early works and believed that human intelligence would gradually become more penetrating and wide-ranging, capable of solving all kinds of problems: "Il n'est point exact de dire que l'homme est intelligent; il le devient. L'intelligence n'est pas un absolu, elle se fait" (Mémoires, III, p. 419).

1. Especially Durkheim, Renan and Comte, to whom he often refers.

2. i.e., Pascendi.

Loisy's views on L'Evolution Créatrice are also expressed in a letter to Raymond Boyer de Sainte Suzanne on 27th February 1918¹:

Ce n'est pas Dieu, au sens chrétien du mot, qu'on trouve dans L'Evolution Créatrice mais l'infinie poussée de l'esprit; cette poussée a son flux et son reflux ... Si le mot panthéisme a encore un sens, cela est une forme de panthéisme (p. 186).

Loisy approved of Bergson's critique of the intelligence and liked the idea that its formulations were inexact representations of the real. He then returns to 'intuition' but interprets the word quite differently from Bergson:

Seulement, j'appelle foi ce qu'il appelle intuition parce que ce dont il s'agit me semble être un pressentiment profond des réalités plutôt qu'une perception définie (p. 187).

As to Bergson's cosmogony, Loisy sympathized with the notion of "l'immense poussée de force qui s'épanouit en vie" (p. 187), but claimed ignorance on the topic of an opposition between matter and life: "Il me semble qu'à ces limites, on ne sait plus, et pour ma part, je confesse mon ignorance" (p. 187).

However, Loisy did not or could not make his own faith explicit. He claimed to be unable to conceive a personal God and refused to, or was unable to, expound his religion dogmatically: "pour ce qui est de l'expérience mystique, je tiens que le donné de cette expérience échappe à toute définition ... (Mémoires, III, p. 344). Bergson in fact accused Loisy of failing to support his account of 'l'expérience mystique'² with any proper 'fondement métaphysique' (see Mémoires, III, p. 348, letter of 20th July 1917). Loisy

1. See Alfred Loisy entre la foi et l'incroyance, eds. du Centurion, 1968, p. 186. Loisy read E.C. some time in 1917, according to R. Boyer de Sainte Suzanne.

2. In La Religion (Nourry, 1917).

retorted: "Dans une construction théorique et savante, je le veux bien, mais pour le commun usage, pas trop s'en faut" (p. 348). This answer of course does nothing to answer Bergson's criticism.

For Loisy, God was not known in himself through 'metaphysics', but only in terms of human moral aspirations. In La Religion, written before Loisy read l'Evolution Créatrice, religious feeling is very much mingled and confused with moral sentiment. Loisy argues that "religion et morale sont, pour nous, fondées sur la considération mystique du monde et de l'homme lui-même" (La Religion, Ed. 1924 Nourry, p. 6). Loisy makes a basic assumption that religion and morality have the same source. To complicate matters, he then interpolates a third, and foreign, element - that of human sociability: "l'on a inféré avant nous que mysticisme, religion, esprit de sociabilité humaine sont originellement et par nature une seule et même chose" (p. 14). In this line of argument, Loisy was conscious of following Comte and Renan. He maintained, like Comte, that what was currently in the realm of mystery and 'religion' would later find its place in 'science' once it had been analyzed and explained:

La mentalité dite mystique et prélogique ... se perpétue chez beaucoup d'hommes instruits qui, apparemment, savent mettre une cloison étanche entre leur mysticisme et la mentalité logique selon laquelle est conduit le travail de leur pensée dans l'ordre scientifique. Il faudra du temps pour amener en tous les hommes et sur toute l'économie des sociétés le règne de la mentalité rationnelle (pp. 16-17).

He assumed that, with progress in sociology and social science, human behaviour and religious feeling will be explained in 'rational' terms complete with rules of conduct.

Of course, this point of view makes several assumptions: that the religious and scientific spirit are incompatible; that religious experience can be adequately 'explained' by scientific descriptions; that the experimental method can interpret the whole range of experience. In sum, this

supposes religious feeling to be reducible either to a human feeling in the face of the unknown or, alternatively, to an expression of something to do with human relationships.

By the term 'mystical' Loisy seems to mean simply something half-perceived and half understood - an intimation. It is "un pressentiment de l'esprit en nous-mêmes et dans l'humanité, pressentiment que la raison nous aide à réaliser toujours d'une façon incomplète" (p. 29). Mysticism is reduced to a feeling of awe before the immensity of creation:

la religion est cette façon de révérence ... que l'homme a éprouvée devant les choses et les autres hommes et sa propre personnalité (p. 61)¹.

Such an attitude says nothing about the objective truth of religious experience and very little about the specific experience of mystics. Now, if the observer is trying to analyze God in terms of what he sees in man or man's behaviour, he cannot expect a clear answer about the question of God's objective existence.

In 1919, Loisy published De là discipline intellectuelle (Nourry) at a time when he knew Bergson's Evolution Créatrice but had not read L'Energie Spirituelle (which he saw in 1920). In this work he expressed even more scepticism about speculative enquiry:

Pas n'est besoin d'un long et minutieux examen pour s'apercevoir que notre faculté de connaître est loin d'être un instrument de précision, et que nos connaissances n'ont jamais été, qu'elles ne sont pas, que probablement elles ne seront jamais l'expression adéquate des réalités qu'elles représentent (p. 7).

But Loisy in this book separated the progress of intellectual knowledge from progress in the moral sphere. This was a new departure for him:

1. Bergson read La Religion on its publication in 1917 (see Loisy's letter to A. Hontin in his book Alfred Loisy: sa vie, son oeuvre [E. Poulat, 1960, p.183, letter of 22nd August 1917]).

Connaissance et moralité se tiennent: la moralité ne va pas sans un sérieux exercice de l'intelligence; mais ce n'est pas la culture de l'esprit qui, par elle-même, toute seule, institue et fait grandir le sentiment de la moralité (pp. 167-168).

He arrived at a position akin to LeRoy's in "Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?":

Le bien n'est pas une chose à connaître, à réaliser par la pensée dans l'intelligence, mais la chose à faire, à réaliser par la volonté dans l'action (p. 168).

Loisy's new approach was accompanied by a revitalized faith in the 'élan vital', or life force. In "La Mystique", a 1924 introduction to the second edition of La Religion, Loisy speaks of 'L'Esprit' as the 'dynamisme' or 'force mystérieuse' by which, as Sartiaux puts it, "est portée, réalisée 'la machine universelle'" (Op. cit., p. 192). Sartiaux adds: "Nous avons déjà rencontré cette sorte d'hylozoïsme dans les écrits de jeunesse de M. Loisy. La lecture de l'Evolution Créatrice de Bergson l'a ranimé" (p. 252).

The publication of Les Deux Sources, however, caused a rift between Loisy and Bergson which was irreparable and final. In it Bergson described mysticism as the contact between man's spirit and an objective, personal God and he accepted the framework of Christian metaphysics to analyze the relationship between God and his creation. Because of this, Loisy was provoked to write a refutation of Bergson in Y a-t-il deux sources de la morale et de la religion? (Nourry, 1933). In it he maintained that there was only one source of religion, which was, at bottom, a sense of mystery before the vast unknown. Loisy reproached Bergson for his 'esprit de système' by which he attempted to "intégrer le mysticisme comme élément ou partie dans une synthèse de caractère purement philosophique, dans une métaphysique de l'être universel" (pp. 189-190). For Loisy, mysticism is "essentiellement autre chose que la métaphysique" (p. 190). Metaphysics, on the other hand, is "une spéculation qui, s'élevant au-dessus du réel

observé, recherche les causes premières des choses, plus exactement le premier principe de l'univers" (p. 178). The soul of religion, of morality and of mysticism is one:

l'intuition diffuse dans notre espèce et culminant dans les grands mystiques et les initiateurs des grands mouvements religieux, de l'esprit qui est caché et révélé dans le mystère du monde et le mystère de l'humanité (pp. 177-178).

Thus, although Loisy had a strong moral sense, he had no inclination to accept the dogma of the Catholic Church:

c'est le caractère transcendant, métaphysique de sa théorie qui a induit Bergson à couronner cette théorie par une solution du problème religieux que nous autres [Bremond and Loisy] historiens des religions et de la religion ne saurions admettre¹ (p. 186).

Superficially, it would appear that Loisy was only prepared to consider seriously the facts of religious behaviour in a social context. However, he betrays his own principles, for in Y a-t-il deux sources he develops a hypothetical and speculative theory about the history of religious practices, attempting to prove with the flimsiest of evidence² that Christian doctrine had been derived entirely from earlier religious mythology. The central concepts of personal immortality and of the resurrection of Christ are supposed to have been acquired from pre-existing tales and ideas. These in turn were originally derived from the observation of natural phenomena:

Dans les cultes méditerranéens, cette croyance fut surtout en connexion avec le service de dieux jadis morts et ressuscités, esprits de la végétation mués en divinités agraires, dont le renouveau printanier avait fini par être interprété pour l'immortalité.

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1. The fact that Bremond wrote the two-volume La Métaphysique des Saints does not seem to affect Loisy's judgement!
 2. See the refutation of this theory in Theories of primitive religion by Professor Evans-Pritchard (O.U.P., 1965).

Le mystère chrétien du salut résulte, pour l'historien, d'une combinaison réalisée entre cette conception et le monothéisme juif (pp. 127-128).

Loisy's argument is open to the objection that his own explanation of religious experience and the formation of dogma is as much an unproven hypothesis, as much a speculative theory, as Bergson's or the Thomists'. He leaves out of account the historical events of the Gospels in order to propose a continuity between Eastern cults and Christianity which is highly dubious. He fails to see any novelty in Christianity or its message. Far from being a 'scientific' or 'historical' view, Loisy's is prejudiced and a priori in the extreme. Loisy makes a pretence of disliking speculative thought and yet indulges in it.

LeRoy and Laberthonnière, by way of contrast, are most concerned to demonstrate their fidelity to the primitive Christian faith, and it is their conception of this that places them in opposition to the contemporary Church hierarchy. But Loisy is both anti-clerical and heretical. His attitude to the Church and its dogma is antipathetic:

L'Eglise fait gaspillage de nobles vies, de forces intellectuelles et morales qui lui sont offertes avec un entier dévouement ... elle étouffe, étrangle, sacrifie sans scrupule à sa chimère d'orthodoxie et aux fantaisies de sa domination tyrannique (Mémoires, I, 1930, p. 47).

This leaves us in no doubt as to why he was condemned.

The condemnation of LeRoy and Laberthonnière is more difficult to understand. Both of them, following a monastic ideal, saw the Bible and Tradition as instruments in their quest to reach the source of Christianity as a living faith. Consequently, they were not concerned with explaining dogmas and drawing conclusions by means of dialectic in the manner of the Scholastics - they were concerned with the need for salvation, the reconciliation of man to God and the supernatural life. Their method in philosophy was not

analytical, proceeding from point to point, but synthetic, having in mind the whole person and his destiny. It was characterized by an emphasis on experience, whereas scholastic philosophy emphasized speculation and abstraction.

Loisy's ideas were not in line with either aim. He felt an equal distaste for both insofar as they presumed knowledge of a transcendent God to be possible. And yet he imagined that a respect for science dictated his own attitude. This was not the case, for his own position involved presuppositions requiring explanation and justification just as much as the position of the 'dogmatists'. He intended to draw men away from metaphysical flights to a down-to-earth respect for human dignity and brotherhood and yet ended by making a religion of humanity comparable with that of Auguste Comte:

A l'heure présente, société des nations et religion de l'humanité ne sont encore un idéal assez lointain. Cet accomplissement ne sera pas l'oeuvre d'un jour ni d'une génération, ce sera l'oeuvre d'une époque maintenant commencée (Y a-t-il deux sources de la moralité et la religion?, p. 191).

The application of a single term like 'modernist' to describe writers as different and diverse as LeRoy, Laberthonnière and Loisy not only seems to be a loose and inaccurate use of language; it also gives the impression that there was a movement, a unity of aim and ideal among the protagonists. Such a unity was quite fictitious.

CHAPTER SIX

BERGSON AND BLONDEL: THE UNIFICATION OF LIFE IN GOD

Maurice Blondel (1861-1949) was a contemporary of Bergson and cannot rightly be considered as a disciple. His own L'Action (P.U.F., 1893), which contains the basis of all his later approach to philosophy and Christianity, was published four years after Bergson's L'Essai (1889); but at the time Blondel was not acquainted with Bergson's work. He wrote:

Quant à m'inspirer de Bergson, je l'ai pu d'autant moins que je n'avais pas lu une ligne de lui avant d'achever et de soutenir ma thèse ... (L'Itinéraire philosophique de Maurice Blondel, Spes, 1928, p. 47).

In fact, Blondel had worked out the theme and aim of L'Action by 1889 or earlier, as evidenced by this statement in his Carnets Intimes¹:

C'est notre nature de vouloir le bien et d'y tendre; et c'est un fait que nous n'y réussissons point par nos seules forces; preuve d'un trouble profond et d'un renversement de l'économie humaine. En sorte que vivre selon notre nature est surnaturel; et que la destinée de l'homme est vraiment surhumaine ... (written 8.4.1889, p. 197).

The presuppositions in this statement of intent highlight the difference between Blondel's and Bergson's aims. Bergson's philosophy was intended to be a process of discovery from a position of no presuppositions². Blondel and Bergson never did become friends, although they met at the Société française de philosophie³ and the Académie des Sciences morales et

1. Ed. du Cerf, 1961.

2. This is not to say that Blondel's philosophy assumes a priori speculative ideas about the world; simply that he already regards the demands of an Absolute in one's inner life as a fact of experience. Bergson makes no such assumptions.

3. See the account of a discussion between the two men on 1st July 1909 in Mélanges, pp. 796-797.

politiques, of which they were both members.

Blondel was born and educated at Dijon and obtained his licence ès lettres in philosophy on 14th July 1880 and then became bachelier ès sciences on 28th July 1880. He entered the Ecole Normale just after Bergson had left it but, like Bergson, came under the influence of teachers such as L. Ollé-Lapruné, E. Boutroux and V. Delbos. Blondel failed his Agrégation in November 1884 and went to Italy for a while, returning to re-sit his examinations, only to fail a second time (August 1885). He then taught at the Lycées de Chaumont and Montauban and finally passed the Agrégation in August 1896. He moved to the Lycée Mignet in Aix-en-Provence in October 1886. Between 1891 and 1892, he spent a sabbatical year preparing his thesis, L'Action, with the accompanying Latin work on Leibniz's idea of a 'vinculum substantiale'¹. Action was considered to be an unfit subject for philosophical enquiry by some², but the thesis was completed on 28th October 1892 and was defended by Blondel at the Sorbonne on 7th June 1893. It was published in November. Blondel had his reward for diligence and tenacity - recognition of his original contribution to philosophy followed soon afterwards.

Blondel married Rose Royer in December 1894³, then in 1895 became Maître de Conférences at the Faculté des Lettres of Lille University. He also took courses at Aix-Marseille University from December 1896 onwards,

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1. The full title of the Latin thesis was De vinculo substantiali et de substantia composita apud Leibnitium (1893). The French version was called Une énigme historique: le 'Vinculum Substantiale' d'après Leibniz (P.U.F., 1930). Blondel's studies were conducted at the Collège Stanislas.
 2. See the account in Etudes blondéliennes I (P.U.F., 1951) - "Une soutenance de thèse" by J. Paliard and P. Archambault.
 3. The Blondels had 3 children, but Mme. Blondel died on 7th March 1913.

before becoming Professeur Adjoint there on 4th December 1897 and, finally, Professeur Titulaire in January 1899. He remained at Aix until his retirement in 1927, due to failing sight. Meanwhile, in August 1906, he had bought up the Annales de Philosophie chrétienne and appointed Laberthonnière as editor in chief. The Annales were later placed on the Index, but Blondel was never personally condemned in any of his writings. Blondel's definitive philosophical statement appeared between 1934 and 1937 in the form of a trilogy: La Pensée (2 vols., 1934), L'Etre et les êtres (1935) and L'Action (1936, 1937). Blondel appended two further volumes to these, entitled La Philosophie et l'Esprit chrétien (1944, 1946). Blondel died, aged 88, on 4th June 1949¹.

Blondel's writings were confronted by continuous and sometimes scurrilous opposition from inside and outside the Catholic Church. He was accused of Modernism, Kantianism, anti-intellectualism, fideism and naturalism². He did not, however, deserve any of these epithets and refused to subscribe to any party line or movement except Catholicism itself. His basic aim was to answer the question which opens L'Action

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1. Blondel wrote copiously during his long lifetime and a bibliography complete to 1951 has been compiled by A. Hayen (Bibliographie blondélienne 1888-1951), while A. Costa has added the years 1951-1961 to the list of published works, (Teorisi, Catania, No. 17 [1962], pp. 294-320), bringing the total number of entries to 1394! Since 1962 a considerable amount of Blondel's correspondence has been published - with Teilhard de Chardin (Beauchesne, 1965); with A. Valensin (2 vols. 1899-1912, Aubier, 1957; Vol. 3 1912-1947, Aubier, 1965) and with J. Wehrle (2 vols., Aubier, 1969). All these are edited by H. De Lubac. The correspondence with Laberthonnière (Correspondance philosophique, Ed. du Seuil, 1961) is edited by C. Tresmontant and that with H. Bremond (3 vols., Aubier, 1970-1971) by A. Blanchet. René Marlé's Au Coeur de la Crise Moderniste (Aubier, 1960) also contains a large amount of Blondel's correspondence.
 2. Bouillard H. discusses these charges in detail in Blondel et le Christianisme (Ed. du Seuil, 1961).

(1893): "Oui ou non, la vie humaine a-t-elle un sens, l'homme a-t-il une destinée?". He wished to demonstrate that intellectual and moral honesty demanded an affirmative response. He would then proceed to examine the consequences of that response and the possibility of man's fulfilment of his destiny. This whole project, aimed at freethinkers and rationalists, had Blondel embroiled in most of the major theological controversies of his time.

To begin with, in 1896, Blondel entered an argument over the methods in apologetics with his Lettre¹ attacking M-B. Schwalm's article, "L'Acte de foi est-il raisonnable?" (Revue Thomiste, March 1896). Schwalm's reaction was swift and scathing. In "Les illusions de l'idéalisme et leurs dangers pour la foi" (Revue Thomiste, September 1896) he called Blondel's Lettre "l'essai hardi du jeune apologiste néo-kantien" (p. 413) and added: "La 'méthode de la philosophie', pour [Blondel], c'est la méthode kantienne poussée à ses dernières conséquences phénoménistes" (p. 413). The conclusion to Schwalm's study is that Blondel's study "fourmille de propositions hérétiques, erronées ou téméraires" (p. 440). Schwalm followed this article with one called "L'Apologétique contemporaine doit-elle adopter une méthode nouvelle?" (Revue Thomiste, March 1897) and the charge of 'immanence' is added to the others. He argues that for Blondel:

l'immanence inclut une pensée ~~nécessairement~~ emmurée dans le phénoménisme le plus pur de la connaissance et de l'action ... Il est donc rigoureusement légitime de dénier à la raison pure, usant de cette doctrine, l'affirmation d'une réalité quelconque, y compris son

1. Full title: "Lettre sur les exigences de la pensée contemporaine en matière d'apologétique et sur la méthode de la philosophie dans l'étude du problème religieux" (1896: now in Blondel: Les premiers écrits, II, P.U.F., 1956).

dynamisme meme. C'est l'immanence absolue de la pensée ... (p. 87).

These articles set the tone for all subsequent criticism, but it is especially noteworthy that the criticisms made of Blondel were precisely those levelled at Bergson.

Blondel entered the modernist debate through writing "Histoire et Dogme" in La Quinzaine (1904: reprinted in Premiers Ecrits, II, P.U.F., 1956). It was intended to be a reply to Loisy's L'Evangile et l'Eglise (1902). Blondel also attacked LeRoy in the article "Le rôle et la notion du miracle" (pseudonym Bernard de Saily; Annales, July 1907, pp. 337-362)¹. He upheld the possibility of a separate supernatural realm which could not be incorporated into nature. On the contrary, nature would have to be drawn up into the realm of grace by God:

Miracle et surnaturel ne sont pas simplement un épanouissement suprême de la nature, un retour aux conditions parfaites de la vie spirituelle, une liberté affranchie des routines et victoires de l'automatisme matériel, une communication du Dieu transcendant, un triomphe de la puissance métaphysique par lui en nous et par nous dans les choses. Le surnaturel est quelque chose d'anormal, une dérogation positive ... (p. 346).

The encyclical Pascendi condemned the philosophy of 'immanence' in two senses but allowed a third usage which was admissible. The heresies would be either to assimilate God's action to the action of nature or to identify the two, as a pantheist might. The third usage infers that God is more present to man than he is to himself and yet transcends him:

1. Blondel was also acquainted with the modernists F. Van Hùgel (from 1895) and L. Laberthonnière (from 1894). For details of Blondel's relations with the modernists, see the introduction to The Letter on Apologetics by I. Trethowan and A. Dru (Harvill Press, N.Y., 1964).

Sunt qui in eo collocant, quod Deus agens intime adsit in homine, magis quam ipse sibi homo; quod plane, si recte intelligitur, reprehensionem non habet (Denzinger, Freiburg, 1967, col. 2087).

Blondel claimed this latter definition as his own and insisted that it maintained "la présence en nous d'une grâce ou prévenante ou inhabitante sans laquelle nous ne pouvons rien dans l'ordre de la foi et du salut et qu'implique toute conversion, toute vie chrétienne" (L'Itinéraire, p. 100)¹. Blondel's consistent use of this Augustinian concept of 'immanence' means that, as J. Rivière put it, "rien n'est plus injuste que de mettre [Blondel] comme on le fait assez communément, au nombre des modernistes" (Le modernisme dans l'Eglise, Letouzey et Ané, 1929, p. 122). For Blondel, the supernatural is not dependent of man's feelings or attitudes - it exists independently; moreover, it cannot be grasped fully either by reason or via moral or spiritual intuition:

Est surnaturel ... ce qui, procédant d'une correspondance gratuite de Dieu, élève la créature intelligente à un état qui ne saurait être réalisé, ni mérité, ni même conçu expressément par aucune force naturelle: car il s'agit de la communication de l'intime vie divine ... vérité impénétrable à toute vue philosophique, d'un bien supérieur à toute aspiration de la volonté (Letter to A. Valensin of 19.12.1919, Blondel-Teilhard de Chardin: Correspondance, Beauchesne, 1965, p. 41).

A third area of controversy surrounded the periodical L'Action Française run by Charles Maurras. Its right-wing views were supported by certain neo-Thomists, such as Cardinal Billot and Humbert Clérissac, O.P. Blondel attacked the atheistic management and extremist politics of the magazine in La Semaine Sociale de Bordeaux et le Monophorisme (pseudonym 'Testis', Blond et Gay, 1910)². Pedro Descoqs, S.J., then in turn defended L'Action Française,

1. L'Itinéraire philosophique de Maurice Blondel, Textes présentés par F. Lefèvre (Spes, 1928).

2. Originally articles in Annales, October 1909-May 1910.

against Blondel in his Monophorisme et l'Action Francaise (Beauchesne, 1913).

In spite of his protestations of orthodoxy, the opposition to Blondel was unabated, but Cardinal Perraud and Père Lepidi, Maître du Sacré Palais, spoke to Leo XIII on Blondel's behalf, and in 1895 the Pope gave an audience to Blondel, exhorting him to continue teaching his 'buone philosophie (sic) sans grief aucun' (L'Itinéraire, p. 99). Later, Pius X also received Blondel (on 5th May 1924) and assured him of his support, adding: "Que vos étudiants s'inspirent de votre esprit" (p. 102). This did not silence the critics, however.

Much of the opposition to Blondel was aroused because of his antagonism to scholasticism. He considered that the scholastics failed to realize the importance of psychology:

... l'idéologie scolastique dont on reste exclusivement pénétré ne comporte pas l'étude de la psychologie religieuse ni des faits subjectifs qui exprime à la conscience l'action des réalités objectives dont la Révélation nous indique la présence en nous (Blondel-Wehrle: Correspondance, 22.9.07, p. 381).

The importance of the psychological approach to religion is taken to its logical conclusion by Blondel in L'Action and by Bergson in Les Deux Sources and consists in its emphasis on the necessity for the will to reach the true object of its desire; this is explained succinctly by Blondel as follows:

le surnaturel ne réside pas dans une connaissance métaphysique, fût-elle la vue du rôle ontologique du médiateur; il réside dans une relation, dans un pacte d'amour qui ... crée un nouveau règne de grâce, de libre intimité, de prédilection amissible et inégale (Id., 8.3.03, p. 175).

According to Blondel, the lack of clear psychological explanation in scholasticism ruins a true understanding of the role of the dogma and of the place of the supernatural, for in the scholastic system both are described

in terms of externals arbitrarily imposed from the outside:

L'obligation d'être chrétien ne naît que du commandement édicté du dehors, transmis et présenté par des signes extérieurs. Il n'y a point de science de la préparation intérieure et subjective, et la notion de l'âme de l'Eglise indépendante de son corps est un mystère incompréhensible (Lettres philosophiques, Aubier, 1961, p. 135, *italics in original*).

The relationship between nature and the supernatural likewise becomes an unfathomable mystery:

Pour les scolastiques, les deux ordres ... subordonnés en une hiérarchie ascendante se superposaient en se touchant et en communiquant, mais en restant extérieurs l'un à l'autre (p. 35).

God, fixed largely in the realm of supernature, cannot be known except by analogy. In neo-Thomism, says Blondel, "seule la révélation nous donne une connaissance positive ..." ("La notion et le rôle du miracle", Annales, No. 4, 1907, p. 346). Scholasticism thus easily degenerates into a form of agnosticism, or, even worse, arid intellectualism. Such neo-Thomism is a philosophy of concepts, hard and separate like marbles:

le thomisme apparaît à beaucoup comme une description exacte, mais, si je puis dire, statique, comme une superposition d'éléments ..." (Lettre, p. 27).

Blondel did later retreat from this bold position of animosity towards neo-Thomism and in his trilogy attempted to synthesize the scholastic and Augustinian approaches. However, these early arguments were never corrected and did not miss their target. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that Blondel envisaged the rationalist Aristotelean interpretation of Aquinas prevalent at the turn of the century.

The Catholic opposition to Blondel can be traced to many of the very people who attacked Bergson. Two of the protagonists were in fact Jacques Maritain and Joseph de Tonquédec, S.J. Tonquédec wrote a full-length work based on the false premise that Blondel supported a

doctrine of immanence (Immanence, Beauchesne, 2nd ed. 1913). Tonquédec complains that, for Blondel, "il ne peut être question de démontrer spéculativement l'existence de Dieu, la réalité du surnaturel, le fait d'une intervention divine ..." (p. 28). This anti-intellectualism, he argues, is common to "les systèmes philosophiques qui combinent l'idéalisme avec les idées bergsoniennes sur le 'morcelage'. Non seulement la pensée est la réalité unique, mais il n'y a pas de division dans la pensée, pas d'états de conscience adéquatement distincts" (p. 6). According to Tonquédec, Blondel's doctrine of 'immanence' "est synonyme de connexion intrinsèque, indissoluble ... une compénétration où [les essences] s'enchaînent et se soutiennent par des rapports nécessaires ..." (pp. 11-12).

This is by no means Blondel's idea. The mystic state of union with God is the lifting of the personality into a new state:

Libéré des partialités de nos connaissances présentes, le mysticisme est élevé (parfois jusqu'en sa vie organique, sensible, intellectuelle), en un état d'unité et de conformité divine ("Le problème de la mystique", Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journée, No. 3, [1925], p. 52).

Maritain also seems to desire a marriage of Blondel's and Bergson's doctrines, finding the common ground in their 'anti-intellectualism':

M. Blondel prend le concept pour un portrait, un doublet artificiel, un succédané, une effigie ... En réalité, l'idée, le concept ou la notion, n'est pas la chose vue, c'est le moyen de voir, c'est ... un signe formel ... dont la nature est de signifier ("L'Intelligence d'après M. Blondel", Revue de philosophie, Vol. 30, 1923, pp. 353-354).

Blondel's views are in fact more complex than this and will be outlined shortly, but it is clear that there was an early tendency for Blondel and Bergson to be associated together because of certain superficial resemblances. Such a treatment of the two men finds a good expression

in the article by Jourdain Messaut, O.P., entitled "Le rôle intellectuel de la théologie dans l'apostolat" (Revue Thomiste, Vol. 18, 1935, pp. 330-386):

Les trois grands penseurs contemporains qui représentent l'anti-intellectualisme et exercent à des degrés divers une influence sur les esprits théologiques sont MM. Bergson, Brunschvicg et Blondel (p. 332).

Messaut indeed attempts to define 'anti-intellectual' in this context as "une même conception mécaniste de l'intelligence, faculté 'fabricatrice' de concept - et dans une même conception matérielle du concept, image photographique du réel" (p. 340). The error at the root of all three philosophical systems consists, for him, in "la négation de la vitalité de l'intelligence" (p. 340, italics in original).

Before proceeding further on this matter it is essential to realize that, although Bergson and Blondel are placed together by others, there was little direct influence either way. That they arrived at certain similar conclusions is more a reaction to the rigid intellectualism of their day than a mutual admiration or respect. Blondel's direct influences were from two main sources; the German idealist tradition and the patristic tradition of the church. He particularly appreciated Spinoza, Fichte, Kant and Hegel on the one hand and St. Paul, St. Augustine and St. Bernard of Clairvaux on the other. The Germanic influence is explored in great detail by J.J. MacNeill, S.J., in The Blondelian Synthesis (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1966) and Hegel's influence alone is examined by P. Henrici in Hegel und Blondel (Verlag Berchmanskolleg, 1958) and also by Etienne Borne in Passion de la vérité (A. Fayard, 1962). Of the church fathers Blondel himself wrote:

La lecture de S. Bernard et la pratique du Nouveau Testament, particulièrement de S. Paul, m'ont aidé, dès le début et constamment, à me trouver dépaycé

dans notre monde intellectuel ... (L'Itinéraire, p. 42)¹.

Blondel does, however, make mention of more modern influences, including Pascal, Spinoza and V. Delbos (p. 46), while Maine de Biran came to his notice through A. Bertrand at the Lycée de Dijon and H. Joly led him from legal studies "pour m'attacher d'abord à Leibniz et aux charmes secrets du Vinculum Substantiale (c'est même là une des cellules-mères de ma pensée)" (pp. 56-57).

It is worth noting that Blondel shared certain influences in common with Bergson; notably neo-Platonist influences - Plotinus in Bergson's case², Augustine in Blondel's and Maine de Biran in both³. Perhaps this neo-Platonist influence emerges most clearly in Blondel's and Bergson's re-emphasis on experience of the self and in their common desire to find an explanation for the unity of life and of the personality amidst so many heterogeneous and disparate elements.

What then did Blondel think of Bergson's philosophy? He first read Bergson in March 1897, four years after completion of L'Action. He commented in the Correspondance philosophique: Blondel-Laberthonnière:

J'ai commencé à lire Bergson: c'est extrêmement neuf,

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1. The great influence of St. Augustine on Blondel is attested to by H. Bouillard (in Blondel et le Christianisme, Ed. du Seuil, 1961) and is analyzed in detail by J. Chaix-Ruy, "Maurice Blondel et saint Augustin" (in Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes, No. 11 [1965], pp. 55-84) and by Aimé Forest in "L'Augustinisme de Maurice Blondel" (Sciences Ecclésiastiques, Montréal, No. 14 [1962], pp. 175-193). Blondel himself wrote a number of articles on Augustine and three of these appear in Blondel, M. Dialogues avec les philosophes, Ed. H. Gouhier (Aubier, 1966).
 2. See Bergson et Plotin, R-M. Mossé-Bastide (P.U.F., 1959).
 3. See "Bergson et Maine de Biran" by H. Gouhier, Etudes bergsoniennes I (1948). The connection between Blondel's and Maine's thought is analyzed by A. Dru in the introduction to The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma (Harvill Press, N.Y., 1964).

satisfaisant; mais peut-être ... plus anti-intellectualiste que je ne voudrais. Car il faut tenir compte de ce fait que nous attribuons invinciblement à notre corps une efficacité représentative: ce qui est sans doute le ressort destiné à nous faire passer par le Verbe (p. 110).

It may seem surprising, judging from criticisms of Blondel, that Blondel found fault with Bergson's 'anti-intellectualism'. He was in closer agreement with Bergson, however, over the latter's analysis of the personality in "Introduction à la Métaphysique" (1903). Blondel wrote to Loisy (6th February 1903) that:

la distinction de la personne métaphysique et de la personne psychologique est une de ces logomachies que Bergson, après tant d'autres, vient une fois de plus de réduire en poussière (Au coeur de la crise moderniste, R. Marlé, p. 77).

Nevertheless, most of Blondel's comments on the positive teaching in Bergson's philosophy are, in the last analysis, critical, as with this example from L'itinéraire philosophique:

Après-1893, c'est avec un vif plaisir que j'ai goûté la merveilleuse imagerie du philosophe-poète de l'élan vital; il me faisait songer à la floraison printanière de la pensée ionienne, à une seconde novitas florida mundi ... Toutefois, la partie critique est souvent belle et féconde ... toute la partie positive se déroule en un plan qui me semble finalement intenable. Aussi les mots mêmes que nous employons volontiers l'un et l'autre, tels que vie, action, intelligence, etc. ... me semblent chez lui ... déracinés, désaxés et décapités, au point que 'la durée pure' et 'l'évolution créatrice' n'ont pu, après coup, que m'aider à prendre davantage conscience d'une inspiration totalement divergente ... (pp. 47-48, italics in original).

In his only article on Bergson¹ - "La philosophie ouverte" (in H. Bergson: Essais et Témoignages, Eds. Thévenaz & Béguin, Ed. de la

1. There are many references to Bergson's ideas elsewhere (often without a name attached) and the last part of the article "Le point de départ de la recherche philosophique" (Annales, Nos. 151-152 [1906], pp. 337-360, 225-230) also considers Bergson's philosophy in some detail.

Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1943) - Blondel again praises Bergson's destructive work: "... sa pars destruens et purificans [était] le premier et grand service qu'il a rendu à notre monde intellectuel", and had the effect of liberating it "d'un positivisme, d'un scientisme, d'un rationalisme abstrait et figé, d'un formalisme emprisonnant ou d'un dilettantisme anarchique" (p. 75). He opened the way for metaphysical research. Bergson stimulated "une novation de valeurs spirituelles, un accès à des problèmes que la philosophie dite 'séparée' ..." (p. 75).

Obviously, Blondel is eager to dissociate himself from the positive side of Bergson's work. In this respect, his attempt to distance himself and retain his own independence leads him sometimes to do less than justice to Bergson. Thus he argues that, whereas he [Blondel] regards the hypothesis of the supernatural as all-important in his work, he considers Bergson to dismiss this idea altogether. In speaking of Bergsonism he comments:

s'il y a une vie religieuse et une existence supérieure, elle suppose non pas tant un prolongement qu'un changement d'état, non pas tant une profondeur subliminale des forces naturelles qu'une ascension spirituelle et une transfiguration morale dont aucune constatation positive des sens ou de la science ne peut déceler la réalité (Itinéraire, pp. 49-50).

The criticisms Blondel makes of Bergson are normally directed at L'Evolution Créatrice, in which the concept of God is ambiguous and inchoate because Bergson has left the religious question to one side. The common Catholic misconception is Blondel's also; that 'l'élan vital' is commensurable with God himself. Bergson is careful not to create an identity between the two and adopts a similar strategy to Blondel himself, which is to distinguish the source of action - 'l'élan vital' - from its effects in the world of nature. Perhaps Bergson fails to make this clear in the book itself to the satisfaction of a theologian but in his letter to Tonquédec he describes

God as "la source d'où sortent ... les 'courants' ou 'élans' dont chacun formera un monde: il en reste donc distinct" (Mélanges, p. 766, Letter of 12.5.08). In Les Deux Sources he constantly implies that dynamic morality and religion represent something quite new, a breakthrough which is initiated by an attraction from above (see Oeuvres, pp. 1003-1004).

Blondel is a more astute theologian than Bergson perhaps, and yet he too speaks as though there were no formal incompatibility between nature and the supernatural, even if there is no simple continuity. Both worlds come together in action, where there is a tension between what we will to think, desire and do and what we in fact think, desire and do such that, "dans les négations factices ou les fins artificiellement voulues, se retrouvent encore les affirmations profondes et les besoins incoercibles qu'elles impliquent" (Lettre, Premiers Ecrits II, p. 606). Action in the natural world reveals in man an exigency for the supernatural, which alone is adequate to fulfil his deepest needs and desires:

Bref, ce que nous voulons réellement, c'est non pas ce qui est en nous, déjà réalisé, mais ce qui nous dépasse et nous commande. Quoi qu'on veuille, on veut ce qu'on n'est pas (L'Action, 1893, pp. 133-134).

This idea is almost echoed by Bergson in "La conscience et la vie", where he asserts that:

Visiblement une force travaille devant nous, qui cherche à se libérer de ses entraves et aussi à se dépasser elle-même, à donner d'abord tout ce qu'elle a et ensuite plus qu'elle n'a: comment définir autrement l'esprit? (pp. 830-831).

However, there is a vital difference between the two ideas. A valid complaint about Bergson's 'élan vital' or 'esprit' is that it seems to imply the possibility of a self-sufficient world-order in which communion with God is an optional extra, an additional bonus, and not a necessity of

life. This is also the impression given in Les Deux Sources. For Blondel, on the other hand, man requires God and his life is not only unfulfilled without him, but he is literally sub-normal:

Pour consommer la nature et clore l'aspiration de l'homme, l'homme et la nature ne suffisent pas ... (L'Action, 1893, p. 401).

... ce n'est pas seulement pour croire et pour agir, pour connaître et opérer la vérité, c'est pour remédier aux inévitables défaillances de l'action qu'un secours est essentiel à l'homme ... (p. 399).

For Blondel, it is not solely through intuitive effort, attention or introspection that a man finds God; it is through action which unites him as a composite whole of will and thought, body and soul. God is not simply to be perceived, but to be chosen; it is moral action and not vision which occupies the central position in Blondel's philosophy. Bergson speaks of a spiritual world which is intuited or 'perceived' as the origin of the self or of all life; but Blondel presents a largely hidden God who is opted for or rejected. Once opted for, he becomes known through the life of faith and in the purification of the will. Such a choice is "à la fois le triomphe et le sacrifice de la volonté" (L'Action [1893], p. 376). One opts either for self or for God; there is no middle way:

Vouloir et ne pas pouvoir, pouvoir et ne pas vouloir, c'est l'option même qui s'offre à la liberté: 's'aimer jusqu'au mépris de Dieu, aimer Dieu jusqu'au mépris de soi' (p. 355).

This choice is presented as a necessity of experience, not of reason alone. The rational and scholastic arguments for God's existence are given little or no credence in the fourth part of L'Action (pp. 345-348) because "le problème est de savoir, non si cet 'unique nécessaire' est le terme abstrait d'un raisonnement, mais s'il pourra, lui aussi, rentrer comme une vivante vérité dans le développement de l'action voulue" (p. 340). The

basis for knowledge is therefore real experience.

So Bergson's idea of human action may not prima facie appear to play an important role in his philosophy. But, in fact, his proof of the freedom of the will and his characterization of man as a creator above all both reflect a world in which action is a primary fact of life. Bergson understands the free act as an expression of the whole personality in much the same way as Blondel believes that action unites the various faculties of man's nature. Blondel summarizes this idea as follows:

Il s'agit du tout de l'homme; ce n'est donc pas dans la pensée seule qu'on doit chercher [la vie]. C'est dans l'action qu'il va falloir transporter le centre de la philosophie, parce que là se trouve aussi le centre de la vie (L'Action [1893], p. xxiii).

Bergson's parallel idea is expressed in L'Essai:

C'est de l'âme entière, en effet, que la décision libre émane; et l'acte sera d'autant plus libre que la série dynamique à laquelle il se rattache tendra davantage à s'identifier avec le moi fondamental (p. 110).

Bergson's L'Evolution Créatrice is of course much concerned with action, but only in its universal application. This type of action is also analyzed by Blondel in the second version of L'Action, where he focuses attention upon 'le pur agir' - God's action in creation, rather than upon human action. This will be considered in detail later.

Although Blondel's and Bergson's philosophies are reputed to be philosophies of action, both also devote a considerable part of their work to an analysis of the role of thought in life. Action does not magically throw up its own interpretation of life, but itself forms the raw material for interpretation. Both philosophers consider that 'mind' is a complex reality not reducible to sensations: Blondel makes this

clear in Le procès de l'intelligence (Bloud et Gay, 1922)¹:

Il n'y aurait pas d'intelligence du tout, pas même de conscience réfléchie ni de perception proprement dite du sensible, s'il ne se trouvait dans la connaissance même un élément irréductible à la sensation (p. 226).

However, in the attempt to account for and explain the relationship between mind and matter, their theories diverge somewhat. Whereas Bergson posits an intermediate 'image' and makes intelligence incapable of comprehending movement, Blondel instead adopts a neo-Thomist point of view and reverses the conclusions of Bergson's theory:

... on n'est intelligent qu'en dégageant des choses subies une pensée qui ne se borne pas à en être une représentation ou une image, une pensée qui n'y est pas contenue et toute faite, mais qui les contient, les comprend, les exprime, les illumine, les domine, une pensée qui dans le réel apparent cherche et prétend trouver un réel plus réel encore (p. 227).

Nevertheless, both Bergson and Blondel do adhere to the theory that the human intelligence is prone to systematize and 'immobilize', to represent and juxtapose:

Dans les conditions actuelles de son exercice, l'esprit humain, pour concevoir distinctement ses idées, enfante des signes, institue des rapports et des analogies, substitue ses représentations et son langage dissociateur à la voix directe des choses toutes simples ... (p. 231).

Blondel attributes to 'ratio' - the discursive intelligence - this disposition to petrify reality and convert awareness into fixed and well-defined ideas. This now familiar distinction Blondel attributes to the insight of scholastic philosophers:

Les principes rationnels, comme les appellent les

1. Blondel's contribution to this book was originally published as articles in La Nouvelle Journée (August 1920-August 1921).

modernes constituent ce qu'au moyen âge on appelait plus volontiers et plus justement l'intellectus, tandis que le mot ratio concernait plutôt l'ordre discursif de la science, en tant qu'elle s'applique aux données contingentes et relatives ... (L'Etre et les êtres, p. 416).

The basic problem with 'ratio' is that it is posterior to 'intellectus' and is apt to disfigure primordial awareness into categories of its own making or into preconceived prejudices. This means that thought in man has two distinct phases: "deux modes hétérogènes, deux sortes d'esprit, deux phases alternatives; formes discursives ou ébauches intuitives, esprit de géométrie ou esprit de finesse" (La Pensée, II, P.U.F., 1934, p. 17).

The fact that 'ratio' follows a misguided method of procedure so often does not mean that it is completely incapable of being rightly guided. Blondel blames Bergson for the propagation of this misconception:

A en croire certaine 'philosophie nouvelle', la pensée discursive ne serait qu'un artifice, en vue d'utilité pratique, mais sans aucune vérité intrinsèque ... Notre dessein est au contraire d'expliquer comment il se fait que la connaissance analytique et par concepts loin d'être artificielle et simplement utilitaire ... est foncièrement naturelle et ordonnée à la solidité de l'intelligence à la distinction et à l'union des esprits (Le procès de l'intelligence, p. 288, italics in original).

Blondel is therefore concerned to demonstrate the unity of mind in its orientation towards the truth, as will be seen.

Blondel suggests a reason why the discursive faculty has so often been regarded as somehow superior to intuitive apprehension:

On se figure volontiers que, à la différence des données empiriques et des existences concrètes, nos concepts offrent une cohérence interne qui les rend définis et stables, au point qu'ils échappent au devenir et qu'ils constituent un ordre fixe qui semble les rendre supérieurs au mouvement et à la durée (La Pensée, II, p. 46).

Needless to say, Blondel is very much in line with Bergson's thought on this

matter. But not only does Blondel introduce the idea that concepts somehow petrify real time; he also contrasts concepts with intuitions:

Jamais par elle-même, par ses méthodes, par ses ressources propres, [la raison] ne recouvre l'intuition première en sa fraîcheur, elle n'atteint l'intuition finale en sa plénitude (Le Procès, pp. 231-232).

For these reasons, then, our mind is "éprise de fixité et de sécurité, affamée de 'présence réelle' et de possession" (p. 232). Consequently, Blondel, like Bergson, calls for a return to original experience:

il n'y a de science que du réel, et il n'y a de réel que le concret, en qui le singulier et l'universel s'épousent en dehors de l'abstrait et du général (La Pensée, II, p. 46).

Having outlined some startling similarities between the two doctrines, it is vitally necessary to understand the subtle, but important differences. For Blondel, the 'real' is not commensurate with Bergson's 'données immédiates' which ostensibly refers to the 'given' outside the mind or as the object of mind. The primary intuition is, according to Blondel, not the mind's grasp of externals but the mind's part in and participation in the sum total of reality. Mind is part of 'les données immédiates'. Secondly, Blondel's 'intuition' means not only awareness of material reality but includes the moral and spiritual data of life and, more than this, an acknowledgement that part of the 'given' cannot be definitively known at all for it transcends human faculties. For Blondel, then, 'les données immédiates' are not the sum total of reality, as Bergson often seems to imply, but they are part of a larger whole which must be taken into account. Thirdly, whereas in Bergson the discursive faculty invariably operates separately from intuition, according to Blondel thought is already active and present in intuition itself; it is simultaneously present in the shape of reflection and analysis:

... l'acquisition des perceptions, plus encore que celle des impressions, semble s'opérer automatiquement; mais la réflexion peut et doit intervenir soit pour préciser cette culture d'une sensibilité déjà connaissante, soit surtout pour la renseigner sur ses dessous ... soit enfin et mieux encore pour l'empêcher d'arrêter le mouvement de la pensée à ce qui est perçu ou même conçu, comme si les prétendues données objectives se suffisaient et nous suffisaient à nous-mêmes (La Pensée, II, pp. 124-125).

It is when discursive reason operates in separation from observation and is inattentive to experience that it is prone to become misled. By nature, however, it is part of the wider whole called mind and is in solidarity with 'intuition' when it is rightly guided.

Another flaw in Bergson's account of 'intuition' is, for Blondel, its claim to be a definitive vision: "... il est des emplois où prédomine la notion d'une vue instantanée et définitive qui exclut toute indigence et toute recherche ..." (La Pensée, II, p. 432). In immediate apprehension there must be not only a presence but a simultaneous consciousness of that presence - in other words, reflection:

Cette pensée concrète, sorte de création continuée, reste ainsi pénétrée d'une présence sans limites assignables et dont par conséquent aucun analyse ne saurait épuiser le contenu réel; car il y a toujours du nouveau, ne fût-ce que par l'effort de l'analyse elle-même (La Pensée, II, p. 30).

So, although on first impressions Blondel's philosophy of mind bears strong resemblance to Bergson's, Blondel in fact adds something to Bergson's intuition, and that is the inevitable participation of a self-reflective consciousness in any 'intuition'. The mind is active rather than passive in the process of intuition. Immediately it becomes clear why Blondel objects that Bergson's intuition spells the annihilation of the consciousness

in 'becoming the other'¹ - because this excludes the possibility of any reflection: " ... à sa limite une telle connaissance s'absorberait en son objet, dans la perte de toute conscience personnelle" (Le Procès, p. 288).

There is a conversation between Bergson and Blondel at the Société française de Philosophie recorded in Mélanges (pp. 796-797) in which the two discuss the relationship between the discursive and intuitive 'faculties'. Bergson agreed with Blondel that intuition is a simple yet total vision. He also agreed that it was not always opposed to the findings of the discursive intelligence and, on the contrary, is usually preceded by "une lente et consciencieuse analyse ..." (p. 797). He goes on to say:

Cette préparation est particulièrement nécessaire quand il s'agit de réalités générales et complexes, telles que la vie, l'instinct, l'évolution ... (p. 797).

However, Bergson misses the real point here, which is that ideally intuition and intellect are to operate simultaneously to give a more complete and accurate understanding of life. Instead, Bergson creates a distinct rift between them, granting to each different functions and different 'directions'. For Blondel, both modes of understanding are geared to the truth and work together in life situations - the act which unifies them most commonly is the judgement².

What is important in thought is its orientation. Intuition is a primary awareness in the first instance and cannot be misled until the discursive intelligence has imposed some false schema upon it. If, however, reason is itself directed towards the truth, then intuition and reason are

1. See Bergson's oft-quoted definition, Oeuvres, p. 1395.

2. See La Pensée, II, p. 61.

in harmony.

At this point Blondel moves on to consider the 'moral' nature of truth. For him, reason can only be 'rightly guided' or guided to truth when it is guided towards the Good, towards God, who is Truth. For reason to be rightly guided the will is of necessity involved in making choices about what to believe. The will, in short, is very much involved in thought. A. Valensin correctly comments that, in Blondel's philosophy, "le monde des concepts et celui des tendances ne sont pas radicalement séparés" (Regards, Aubier, 1955, p. 323). There is an element of choice which enters the picture wherever and whenever thinking is in progress:

Trop volontiers on s' imagine que la pensée et le libre arbitre sont choses hétérogènes ... et beaucoup se figurent que, de ces choses, préalablement constituées, nous n'avons qu'à faire un usage extérieur, tel un instrument qu'on prend ou qu'on laisse pour des besognes plus ou moins étrangères (La Pensée, II, p. 67).

If thought is to approach the truth it must be by way of moral purification: "Purifier, c'est éclairer"; "La vérité noétique égale la vertu morale" (Id., p. 359). Blondel would hold that whereas the object of intelligence is truth and the object of virtue love; nevertheless, both have their object in one and the same God. Love and truth are, in the final analysis, of the same essence. Blondel can confidently say that "la compassion est intelligente" (Le Procès, p. 260). Sometimes, after Pascal, he refuses to justify this position in entirely logical terms:

... il serait ridicule ... de vouloir exposer par ordre les raisons de l'amour, quoique les raisons n'y manquent pas; et Newman a noté combien les causes profondes de nos convictions les plus vitales et les plus certaines sont différentes des justifications abstraites que nous leur prêtons d'ordinaire ... (Le Procès, pp. 258-259).

Occasionally, however, he does 'explain' 'les raisons de l'amour' to some extent; a hint of this occurs in the following passage:

... à mesure qu'on discerne plus d'esprits originaux et qu'on découvre autour de soi plus de vie profonde, c'est qu'on a vraiment plus de pénétration, plus de science des hommes, plus de richesse personnelle, plus d'étendue et d'intériorité (Le Procès, p. 260).

Bergson does have the idea that the will is involved in understanding, and speaks of "le caractère essentiellement actif de l'intuition métaphysique" (P.M., p. 1416); but he conceives the will in terms of effort, tension and attention¹ and not so much in terms of love, aspiration and desire. Further, the effort and attention required for an effective intuition are in fact effort to avoid distraction, to concentrate on making the mind receptive and alert. In Blondel's case, the mind actually interferes in intuition and effort is required to maintain the equation between observation and reason so that thought does not become abstract and distanced from intuition.

However, Blondel does admit that there is never a complete equation between thought and observation in man. In the human mind, 'ratio' and 'intellectus' are never fully reconciled:

... nos deux modes de penser ou de connaître, tout accouplés qu'ils sont comme des parallèles, ne se rencontrent jamais en une seule et même méthode, en une seule et même nature (La Pensée, II, p. 56).

It is only in God that reason and intuition are united, forming a single 'vision':

L'Intelligence en soi est sans doute faite pour voir et capter l'être; mais l'intelligence en nous est présentement empêchée et captive; elle ne peut que raisonner à partir de l'abstraction et des concepts qui miment la réalité, sans que notre connaissance actuelle puisse acquérir une clarté intrinsèque dans l'ordre métaphysique et religieux (Le Procès, p. 300).

So for Blondel the opposition and tension between 'ratio' and 'intellectus'

1. See the first part of "Introduction à la Métaphysique" (P.M., pp. 1416-1418).

are overcome only by unison with God and by taking a decision to accept the inadequacy and contingency of human thought. Human thought has to be surpassed. God is therefore not "la pensée de la pensée" in the Aristotelian tradition; he is beyond our thought and yet confirms its validity, its contact with the real:

Précisément parce que Dieu n'est point seulement idée, ni même idée d'une idée, et qu'en lui l'intelligibilité ne se sépare point de la charité, nous ne serions pas fidèles à la divine Pensée qui nous travaille si nous nous bornions à ce qu'on a appelé la 'science de notre ignorance' ou 'la philosophie de nos insuffisances' (Le Procès, p. 328).

Another of the confusions Blondel attributes to Bergson is the alignment of intuition and instinct on certain occasions:

C'est précisément parce que nous n'avons pas seulement à développer une activité purement terrestre ou immanente qu'il ne nous suffit jamais de subir les choses telles qu'elles sont et de nous y ajuster par une sorte de plasticité organique et obscure comme le font les êtres inférieurs ... (Blondel-Wehrle: Correspondance, p. 616).

In fact, Bergson never renders 'intuition' synonymous with instinct and is careful to avoid such a pitfall. All he does is to assert that intuition is like instinct in its close attachment to reality. In one version of "La conscience et la vie" he makes this explicit by arguing that intuition is "quelque chose comme l'instinct - un instinct conscient, raffiné, spiritualisé ... si l'instinct est encore plus près de la vie que l'intellect et la science ..." (Mélanges, p. 938).

It is, however, true to say that Bergson is not systematic in defining different uses of the word 'intuition' and uses it in various ways. For instance, 'intuition' can mean a direct knowledge of 'la durée réelle' - this use is employed throughout L'Essai; it can also be a direct apprehension of an abstract principle or law; e.g. "une intuition du dedans ... nous fait atteindre les lois essentielles de l'être. Ces lois, en tant qu'elles tombent

sous la conscience, deviennent les lois mêmes de la pensée" (Mélanges, p. 391).

It can also be a vision of the uniqueness and novelty of every experience in an aesthetic sense:

Approfondissons ce que nous éprouvons devant un Turner ou un Corot: nous trouverons que ... c'est que nous avons déjà perçu quelque chose de ce qu'ils nous montrent. Mais nous avons perçu sans apercevoir ... (P.M., p. 1371; c.f. p. 1268).

Intuition can further be the grasp of the 'essence' of some complex unity such as the personality or 'l'élan vital'¹:

L'affirmation du moi par la conscience est une affirmation irréductible ... un acte qui ne nous livre pas ... l'esprit tout entier tel qu'il est en soi, mais où nous saisissons l'esprit comme une réalité distincte de la matière, distinct aussi des phénomènes qui se succèdent (Mélanges, p. 391).

Finally, intuition can be a kind of 'contuition'²; that is, an implicit and indistinct awareness of God or 'the beyond' accompanying a clearer awareness of some other object; for instance, the inner self. In mystical experience, this type of intuition is virtually described as direct contact with the spirit of God. Such an intuition is developed and expounded in Les Deux Sources as an "intuition supra-intellectuelle" (p. 1185).

Blondel certainly seems justified in attacking Bergson for a lack of clarity, but this does not mean to say that Bergson was wrong in linking together various types of intuition under one heading rather than separating them rigidly from one another. All the types of intuition mentioned have two elements in common with one another. First, they are always a spiritual contact. Bergson wrote to Jacques Chevalier, "l'intuition porte sur l'esprit"

1. Intuition of the personality is described in P.M., p. 1394, and of 'l'élan vital' in E.C., p. 569.

2. A word used by St. Augustine to denote a 'sacramental' knowledge of God.

(Mélanges, p. 1322, letter of 28.4.1920). Whether intuition focuses upon 'la durée' or an abstract principle or one's inner self or on God, it grasps the spiritual essence. Secondly, Bergson's 'intuitions' are invariably unifying simple visions of a complex reality often composed of many seemingly disparate and discrete elements. The process of unification is not through abstraction, rationalization or simplification, but a perception or vision of the inner unity of a complex reality:

Vu du dedans, un absolu est donc chose simple; mais envisagé du dehors, c'est-à-dire relativement à autre chose, il devient, par rapport à ces signes qui l'expriment, la pièce d'or dont on n'aura jamais fini de rendre la monnaie ("Introduction à la Métaphysique", P.M., p. 1395).

For Blondel too, philosophy is very much an attempt to understand the unity of life; to achieve a total 'Weltanschauung':

... le philosophe ne se contente pas d'une création partielle et d'une vue suggestive; il est autre chose encore qu'un artiste; il tend ... à être un 'tout voyant', ... à communier, sous les espèces, non avec des mythes, mais avec le fond substantiel des êtres (Itinéraire, p. 125).

This attempt to achieve a simple but comprehensive grasp Blondel always calls 'intuition'. Both Blondel's and Bergson's philosophies are concerned with an ever more probing and profound penetration of the fundamental common factors between all that exists. This is not to say that either countenances any form of 'monism'. Both are convinced of the real heterogeneity of existents and of different 'realms' of existence, but at the same time they are convinced that all existence has a common source. For Blondel one must discover "simultanément les méthodes d'analyse et de synthèse qui mettent en évidence l'hétérogénéité réelle et l'unité plus profonde des fonctions de l'esprit" (Itinéraire, p. 138, italics in original). Bergson speaks as though every event is entirely new and

unpredictable¹, and yet he holds that they all have the same creator and the same creative force running through them.

Blondel calls the bond between every aspect of reality 'un lien'² - "ce 'lien substantiel' qui constitue l'unité concrète de chaque être en assurant sa communion avec tous" (Itinéraire, pp. 66-67). One's own individual life demonstrates this mysterious unity: "au fond notre vie n'est-ce pas, devant Dieu, une bigarrure de pièces et de morceaux sans lien, mais ... elle forme un drame unique dont les parties sont solidaires ..." (Lettres philosophiques, p. 182). Bergson similarly has it that the self is not a series of states, nor a set of faculties, but is a continuing unity, an indivisible whole:

Si nous prenons notre vie intérieure depuis le moment où nous naissons jusqu'au moment où nous mourons, et même au delà, tout cela, tout ce mouvement est absolument comme celui de la flèche de Zénon, c'est un saut indivisible qui occupe du temps, tout le temps que l'on voudra, mais indivisible. Toutes les divisions que l'on voudra y introduire seront artificielles ... ("La personnalité", Mélanges, p. 1223).

Psychological determinism is also dismissed in the same way by Blondel as by Bergson, as in this instance:

Il est ... impossible qu'au regard de la conscience réfléchie un motif, quel qu'il soit, paraisse unique et total ... La liberté même n'est, pas plus que tout autre, un motif à part ou tout formel; elle s'incarne nécessairement dans les motifs particuliers; et quand elle s'en distingue, elle ne les supprime pas (L'Action, 1893, p. 130).

... dans l'acte, il y a plus que l'acte même; il y a l'unité de l'agent, la conciliation systématique de ses forces, la cohésion de ses tendances ... (p. 180).

As previously considered, Bergson discusses the unifying principle in the

1. See, e.g., "Le possible et le réel", P.M., pp. 1344-1345.

2. This term is derived from Leibniz's idea of 'vinculum'.

Universe as 'l'élan vital'. This is a spiritual principle, the origin of which is unresearched at the date of L'Evolution Créatrice (1907), but which is creative, active, gives purpose and direction to life and, at the same time, reconciles its disparate elements. Even matter participates to a small degree in the spirituality of 'l'élan vital' and hence opposing tendencies are reconciled in its action:

L'élan de vie ... consiste, en somme, dans une exigence de création. Il ne peut créer absolument, parce qu'il rencontre devant lui la matière, c'est-à-dire le mouvement inverse du sien. Mais il se saisit de cette matière, qui est la nécessité même, et il tend à y introduire la plus grande somme possible d'indétermination et de liberté (E.C., p. 708, italics in original).

For Bergson all beings are unified by their participation in movement, spirit and liberty.

In La Pensée, I, Blondel himself speaks of:

... le rythme même du devenir, l'effort constructif de la nature, le drame de ce monde dont l'histoire, à travers tant d'échecs et de morts, ressemble toute-fois à une parturition ... (p. 17).

Blondel detects a unifying principle he calls 'la noétique' and characterizes it as "l'immatériel dans la matérialité même" (La Pensée, I, p. 18). The 'noétique' is therefore "une règle d'harmonie, d'unité dans la variété, de beauté intelligible" (p. 19). This realm of 'thought' is not simply a reference to the human intellect; it is firmly placed in God's domain. In fact all human schemas of thought reveal a basic inadequacy to unite facts truly: "c'est donc d'une présence, d'une assistance, d'une communion plus intime avec Dieu que notre pensée personnelle ressent le désir et l'obligation" (p. 281). God is not 'thought' in terms of human ideas at all; he is the principle of human thought and its source:

Précisément parce que Dieu n'est point seulement idée, ni même idée d'une idée et qu'en lui l'intelligibilité ne se sépare point de la charité, nous ne serions pas

fidèles à la divine pensée qui nous travaille si nous nous bornions à ce qu'on a appelé la 'science de notre ignorance' ... (p. 328).

At this point Blondel dissociates himself from LeRoy, for whom the world is an expression or reflection of God's thought. Blondel not only distinguishes between human and divine 'thought'; he makes a further distinction between the 'noétique' and the 'pneumatique' or spiritual.

Whereas the 'noétique' is a principle of unity following the laws of reason, the 'pneumatique' follows a higher principle of unity and often appears to be an irruption into or disruption of life, corresponding to the intrusion of supernatural grace in miraculous events. The 'pneumatique' "apparaît tantôt comme une principe d'anarchie, de dissocation désordonnée, de caprice inintelligible, tantôt comme le triomphe, ébauché ou promis, d'une intégration scientifique ou spirituelle de tout ce qui importe dans le monde, c'est-à-dire d'une pensée capable de résumer en elle tout ce qu'il y a d'immatériel dans les choses" (La Pensée, I, p. 19).

In L'Etre et les Etres Blondel discerns another common bond between all existents, and that is the fact of existence (being) itself. The idea of non-being, for Blondel as for Bergson, is a pseudo-idea (see L'Etre, p. 44). Blondel explains that non-being cannot be conceived because "tout ce qui est perçu, connu, imaginé, nié, même le fictif et l'absurde, c'est encore de l'existant; et dire que le faux, c'est ce qui n'est pas, c'est toujours impliquer la double affirmation du réel et d'un irréel qui est encore du pensé" (L'Etre, pp. 8-9).

This implies that Blondel grants real existence as much to 'ideas' as to 'solid' material things. Bergson also follows this procedure, since he maintains that the idea of 'le néant' is simply the idea of something plus the idea of its exclusion; in other words, it is the presence

of two ideas rather than none¹. Furthermore, our thoughts are composed from elements in the real, existing world.

Being is primordial in life, but all individual existents, though heterogeneous, are dependent for their existence upon some original Being. Bergson does not use these neo-Thomist expressions, but in his later works Blondel does. If we observe closely, he argues, we see "comment tous ensemble, malgré leur hétérogénéité, [les êtres] ... composent un univers réel, à la fois absolument dépendant et absolument séparé du seul Etre en soi qui leur communique néanmoins une réalité propre" (L'Etre, p. 39). Blondel then proceeds to discuss what could properly constitute a 'being' and concludes that neither matter, nor persons, nor 'la durée', nor even a life-force could lay claim to independent, absolute existence (whatever that is), and, following a form of the ontological argument, he claims that such a form of existence is only to be found in God, the 'unique nécessaire', who is alone "l'être en soi" for whom it is "impossible qu'il ne soit pas" (L'Etre, p. 220).

Blondel makes many concessions to the Thomists in L'Etre et les êtres: nevertheless, he does retain and stress the idea of a God whose being is active, creative and spontaneous:

L'être n'est pas seulement ce qui est vu ou visible; il est aussi cette vie jaillissante, cette conquête ou cette perte de l'absolu, cette acceptation ou ce refus d'un don qui, gratuitement offert, engage à fond la responsabilité et la destinée des êtres spirituels ... (p. 219).

Having considered the claims of thought and existence to unite all parts and levels of reality, Blondel moves on in the third part of his trilogy to examine action. This brings him back full circle to his original conviction that action not only unifies the personality, but

1. See E.C., p. 736.

also leads inevitably to the search for a principle of total unity and a total 'explanation'. The whole burden of Blondel's original L'Action is to show that a man's will inevitably wants to go beyond its immediate goals and desires (which are not ultimately satisfying) and to find its real fulfilment. To give but one example: "en posant le déterminisme, on en tire la liberté. En voulant la liberté, on exige le devoir" (p. 143). Only one goal is adequate to reconcile the persistent yearning of the will with its true goal and that is the Infinite found in God himself. The attainment of this goal involves a step of faith (an 'option' or choice, which is accompanied by a final transformation of a man's vision of the world:

... ce n'est point de la pensée que [la foi] passe au coeur, c'est de la pratique qu'elle tire une lumière divine pour l'esprit. Dieu agit dans cette action, et c'est pour cela que la pensée qui succède à l'acte est plus riche d'un infini que celle qui le précède ... (L'Action, 1893, p. 403).

In the later L'Action, action is described in more general terms as "le contraire de l'inertie, du tout fait, de l'immobilité stagnante" (I, p. 28), and Blondel is keen to lay emphasis on the perpetual change and movement in creation. Blondel now regards action as the unifying principle in creation at large, as well as the unifying principle of the human personality:

L'Action, fût-elle d'apparence discursive dans le temps et dans l'espace, comme une succession ou un système de phénomènes, est cependant une réalité ontologique, c'est-à-dire qu'elle forme une unité supérieure à la multiplicité des faits vus du dehors mais ne la constituant pas dans son originalité métaphysique (I, p. 74).

Agir procède d'une branle à la diversité des mouvements ... ce qui importe, c'est de saisir l'âme invisible qui donne l'unité interne (I, p. 74).

Human action is now more closely related to divine action in terms of co-operation in a grand design. In the 1893 thesis God played a somewhat

negative and inscrutable role as 'l'unique nécessaire'. In the later work human action is in close contact with divine action; we feel:

la certitude simultanée de deux vérités qui entrent toujours dans notre sentiment d'agir: celle de nos limites, de notre contingence, de notre dépendance, celle aussi d'une action supérieure à la notre, véritable Agir auquel nous nous tendons à participer (I, p. 109).

Our action is only felt as effective when we co-operate and assist in the action of God: "ce que nous avons d'action n'est qu'un passage à l'éternel Agir" (p. 265).

In his Deux Sources (1932) Bergson likewise has changed his line of approach. He moves from the impersonal account of 'l'élan vital' towards an analysis of human action, and particularly of moral action. Man's natural state is one in which egocentric reason issues its directives for our actions. We can, however, rise above the dictates of intelligence and rejoin the creative activity of God ('l'élan créateur'):

Le cercle, voulu par la nature, a été rompu par l'homme le jour où il a pu se replacer dans l'élan créateur, poussant la nature humaine en avant au lieu de la laisser pivoter sur place (Les Deux Sources, p. 1144).

The transition from egoism to altruism; from closed to open thought and action is made through a series of stages. From individual egoism man passes to family egoism, and then to social egoism whereby he guards the interests of his own group; next, realizing his nation's claims on him, he widens his horizons. Then from chauvinism he passes on to internationalism and a sense of human solidarity. In a final leap, he opens himself to the action of God (which is universal) and begins to love all men through God. Each new aspiration in this series is not worked out intellectually (though it can be intellectually justified); it is a new step, a new outlook on life - which Bergson calls a new emotion: "Il y a des émotions qui sont génératrices

de pensée; et l'invention, quoique d'ordre intellectuel, peut avoir de la sensibilité pour substance ..." (p. 1011). Each new departure requires a new understanding of the world - an ever larger vision of unity. At each stage a greater truth is realized and a greater whole integrated. And yet each stage is unpredictable beforehand and cannot be contrived by rational thinking alone:

... ce n'est pas en élargissant la cité qu'on arrive à l'humanité: entre une morale sociale et une morale humaine la différence n'est pas de degré, mais de nature (p. 1004).

All of this finds its counterpart in Blondel's thought. The inspiration behind Bergson's and Blondel's philosophies is very much the same. Blondel describes an analagous process by which man passes from egocentric isolation to social solidarity. Then he moves "du vinculum social et de l'élan patriotique au culte de l'humanité" (L'Action, II, p. 286) and on to moral altruism, "de l'immanence universelle à la réalisation d'un idéal éthique et d'une morale naturelle" (p. 293) and finally attains the highest form of human activity: "de l'action spécifiquement morale à l'effort de l'homme pour associer le transcendant à son propre agir"¹ (p. 319). This point marks the intervention of grace which empowers and enlightens the man who has sought God as far as human action can take him. To sum up, Blondel argues that "en agissant, l'homme ne limite pas son élan et son rayonnement à la famille, à la cité, à l'humanité. Il jette son intention au delà encore ..." (L'Action, II, p. 294). After the cult of humanity, man is

1. H. Duméry (Raison et Religion dans la philosophie de l'Action (Ed. du Seuil, 1963) thinks that Blondel posits Christian belief as the goal, but H. Bouillard (Blondel et le Christianisme, Id., 1961) argues that the transcendent is undetermined in the first instance and that a further step is required to open one to revelation of specific dogma. I agree with Bouillard on this matter.

faced with a variety of religious alternatives, which Blondel calls 'superstitions'. The Christian God alone can answer the desire of the will through the action of grace.

Thus for Blondel, as for Bergson, in expanding its field of effectiveness, action becomes more and more involved with 'open' morality and religion. But, in addition to this, Blondel would also agree with Bergson in asserting that each new stage in the ascent marks a new and unpredicted state of affairs: "Agir vraiment, n'est-ce pas toujours introduire du nouveau?" (Itinéraire, p. 64). The final action, an option for God, results in a completely new life and vision of the world:

Est surnaturel ... ce qui ... élève la créature intelligente à un état qui ne saurait être ni réalisé, ni mérité, ni même conçu expressément par aucune force naturelle: car il s'agit de la communication de l'intime vie divine ... vérité impénétrable à toute vue philosophique, d'un bien supérieur à toute aspiration de la volonté (Blondel-Teilhard: Correspondance, p. 41).

Thought and action are only reconciled and unified in opting for the hypothesis of the supernatural, for that part of the world which is accessible, intelligible and manageable is neither self-contained nor self-explanatory. It is therefore apparently only a fragment of some partly inaccessible but greater whole. Taken by itself, the accessible fragment - whether accessible to the senses or the intellect - cannot be adequately explained or understood; neither does it fully satisfy our desires and needs. This incompleteness of our world-picture is sensed obscurely even in the most rudimentary form of action. The key to a fuller appreciation of life's complexities, and the road to greater self-fulfilment, lies in widening one's horizons and broadening one's vision. A world in which actions only seem to have physical effects is replaced by a world in which every action has moral consequences and spiritual significance. It is not enough for man to

live instinctively or selfishly, for this amounts to living as if there were no moral or spiritual values in life, which is false:

... Pour nous, au contraire, nous avons à résoudre des problèmes plus complexes et à déployer une activité qui ne trouve pas son équilibre dans la nature physique et ne se contente jamais de simples expédients ...
(Blondel-Wehrlé: Correspondance, pp. 616-617).

Blondel constantly accused Bergson, in one way or another, of naturalizing the supernatural realm and of limiting our vision of the world. The wrong-headedness of Bergson's approach consisted in "le danger de subordonner les fondements de la foi à l'étude d'arguments qui, bons tout au plus à justifier une certaine crédibilité, portent sur un domaine inférieur et étranger à la foi véritable" (p. 642).

Blondel in the last analysis regards both empiricism and 'intuitionism' as restrictive and limiting visions of life:

... nous ne tenons jamais, si empiristes que nous soyons, à la pure apparence sensible; ce n'est pas une chose toute faite et stable; encore une fois, c'est un passage, un stimulant, un lien de rencontre entre le cosmos et l'aspiration humaine qui ne trouve pas dans le monde son point d'appui, ni son terme d'aboutissement (p. 617).

Whereas Bergson posits two 'types' or levels of being - matter and 'consciousness' (which might reduce to one - life)¹, Blondel posits three, each absolutely irreducible to any other - matter, mind and spirit². Matter and mind are 'creations' and not 'emanations'; in other words, have a different

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1. In which matter is as much an emanation from spiritual energy as 'mind'.
 2. Blondel's idea owes much to Pascal, whose three realms were likewise placed at an infinity from one another and yet interconnected. Blondel speaks of 'mon cher Pascal' (Itinéraire, p. 46) and a phrase like the following shows his indebtedness: "le moindre acte a une réalité, une importance, une dignité ... infiniment supérieure au fait de l'univers entier ..." (L'Action, 1893, p. 99).

nature from 'spirit' and not simply a different 'rhythm': "C'est à tort qu'on prétendrait établir une évolution sans novation entre la vie organique et la vie spirituelle" (La Pensée, I, p. 40). The connections between each 'realm' thus constitute the primary difficulty of Blondel's philosophy and the solution he attempts is not in terms of 'intellectual explanation' but is an appeal to the experience of 'action' as a uniting and cohering power which cuts across the barriers. For this reason, 'action' is not the same as the fact of movement in the Universe: becoming or change is only action at a rudimentary level. Human action, on the other hand, introduces intention and direction and implicates the physical, moral and intellectual realms, uniting them as the expression of a personality: "En agissant, nous exprimons notre nature profonde, nos aspirations essentiellement humaines" (L'Action, I, p. 84); not only this, but "par l'action nous nous restituons à l'univers et à Jésus" (Carnets Intimes, p. 147).

Pure action, however, is not to be found in any particular human activity but is the absolute, the perfection for which man strives. It is "une initiative première et effectivement génératrice, sans que, d'autre part cette prolifération rende Dieu passif d'aucune nécessité ..." (L'Action, I, p. 1186). God's action is extra-temporal and absolute. The limits of 'intuition' in Bergson are set at 'la durée réelle' and cannot surpass time, but the limits of 'intuition' in Blondel are set at infinity. For him, time is a created phenomenon as much as anything else:

... le temps est l'apparence nécessaire à l'être créé qui se réalise progressivement, mais au terme qualitatif; ce qui avait paru successif se trouve intégré dans l'état définitif; ce que nous avons perçu par fragments est donné dans une intuition totale et simultanée (Lettres philosophiques, pp. 276-277).

So, although Blondel and Bergson have closer affinities than many

realize and are, as J. Guittou puts it, 'parents d'esprit' (cited in Blondel-Wehrlé: Correspondance, p. 12), Blondel's vision of unity is more far-reaching than Bergson's, for it does not stop at the 'data' of human life, nor of life in the Universe, but reaches beyond to the eternal and infinite.

Blondel's philosophy is one of the most wide-ranging and comprehensive ever devised and his central idea of 'action' truly ingenious and genuinely valid. The fact that he is virtually unknown in England is desperately unfortunate¹.

1. Also the fact that he is peremptorily dismissed by as eminent a writer as A. Vidler is incredible. Vidler writes: "I find his thought obscure, his style insufferable, and his temperament uncongenial" (A Variety of Catholic Modernists, Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp. 78-80). Blondel's zeal for truth is conceived as "evidence of a regular ecclesiastical mind" (pp. 81-82) and his attitude to others "extremely censorious" (p. 82).

CHAPTER SEVEN

JACQUES MARITAIN AND HENRI BERGSON:
THE QUESTION OF INTUITION

Jacques Maritain's influence on twentieth century Catholic thought and on philosophy in general has grown steadily since the days of his first major work, La philosophie bergsonienne: Essais critiques (J. Rivi re, 1914). He is considered now to have been the foremost representative of the neo-Thomist revival encouraged by successive Popes since Leo XIII. Consequently, his attitude to Bergson has been of vital importance with respect to Bergson's reception in the Catholic church.

Maritain's aim has not simply been to refute and repudiate the findings of modern philosophy by contrasting them with the eternal verities present in Thomist doctrine. His method, especially with regard to Bergson, has presumed open-mindedness and attention to detail. In certain fields he has had no fixed Thomist criteria to refer to, since he extended neo-Thomist thought to areas of life with which St. Thomas was not concerned. He has written on social and political issues¹, has evolved a philosophy of Art and aesthetics² and has applied himself to theories of education and history³. Above all, he has aimed at evaluating and developing Aquinas's epistemology and ontology.

For Maritain, Aquinas's is "le seul existentialisme authentique" (Court Trait  de l'Existence et de l'Existant, P. Hartmann, 1947, p. 9). Within this very phrase lies an interpretation. Maritain's ambition was not "d'affubler Thomas d'Aquin d'un costume   la mode", but, in his own

1. e.g. Humanisme Int gral (Aubier, 1936).

2. e.g. Art et Scolastique (Lib. de l'Art Catholique, 1920).

3. e.g. Education at the crossroads (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1943).

words, "je m'applique à rajeunir le thomisme" (Id.). According to him, Thomism offered to modern Catholic philosophers not a list of axioms, but a method of philosophizing suited to the needs of modern culture, and a philosophy with pointers towards the demands of eternal truth. Maritain's open-mindedness is not often praised, but his insights into Bergsonism, for example, enabled him to deepen his understanding of, and, in some instances, to alter his interpretation of, Aquinas in ways which will soon become clear.

Most of the favourable reactions to Maritain's thought have been written by Americans, as can be seen from a glance at the bibliography on Maritain in New Scholasticism (Washington, D.C., No. XLVI, 1972, pp. 118-128).

This periodical contains articles written to commemorate Maritain's 90th birthday (see pp. 1-128). A less recent bibliography of Maritain's own works was compiled by Ruth Burns in The Thomist (N.Y., January 1945, Vol. V) and covers the years 1910-1942. This edition of The Thomist is wholly dedicated to Maritain, as is La Revue Thomiste of 1948 (Vol. 48, Nos. 1, 2).

Maritain was born on 18th November 1882 and his early life was marked by Liberal Protestant influences. His grandfather was Jules Favre (1808-1880), the Republican leader during the second Empire. His mother was a Protestant and his father a nominal Catholic. He received his early education at the Lycées, Condorcet, Carnot and Henri IV. At the latter, he met Ernest Psichari, grandson of Ernest Renan. He became a convinced Socialist by the age of 16 and wrote, "I shall be a socialist and live for the revolution" (Carnet de Notes, pp. 16-17). He always remained socialist, supporting the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War, but later his socialism was democratic and he championed individual freedom and social rights.

Maritain gained a scholarship to read philosophy at the Sorbonne. There he met his future wife, Raïssa Oumancoff, of whom he wrote later: "The aid and inspiration of my beloved Raïssa have penetrated all my life and work"

(Carnet de Notes, Desclée de Brouwer, 2nd ed. 1977, p. 11). Both discovered that the influence of scientific positivism pervaded the Sorbonne at that time and, according to Raïssa Maritain, this attitude "servait à condamner toute activité de l'intelligence qui veut s'élever au-dessus de la simple constatation empirique des faits" (Les Grandes Amitiés [1st pub. 1941], 4th ed. Desclée de Brouwer, p. 54). Mathematics and not metaphysics were considered as the highest achievement of the intelligence:

Je dus apprendre que les savants tiennent les suprêmes principes de l'intelligence en médiocre estime; en tout cas ils ne paraissent pas s'en soucier beaucoup. Les valeurs purement spéculatives les intéressent peu; les mathématiques sont leur plus haut ciel intelligible (p. 74)¹.

Maritain met Charles Péguy early in his University career and Péguy, already an enthusiast of Bergsonism, introduced the Maritains to Bergson's lectures at the Collège de France in 1901. This came at the end of a period of intense anguish, for Raïssa Maritain wrote: "Si cette expérience n'aboutissait pas, la solution serait le suicide" (p. 91). Bergson's philosophy provided real release and relief. It provided Jacques Maritain with an alternative to the materialism and determinism intrinsic to positivism. Raïssa Maritain goes on to say: "Nous n'étions pas les seuls sans doute à qui Bergson rendait la joie de l'esprit en rétablissant la métaphysique dans ses droits" (p. 96). It also led him to embark upon a search for certain knowledge and for God which culminated in his discovery of St. Thomas Aquinas's philosophy in 1908.

Not only did Maritain attend Bergson's public lectures on Fridays (at 4.45 p.m.) entitled "L'Idée du Temps" but he also took notes² from Bergson's

1. Teachers at the Sorbonne at this time included F. Le Dantec, E. Durkheim, V. Delbos, G. Séailles and L. Lévy-Bruhl.

2. See Les grandes amitiés, p. 97.

course (on Saturdays at 3.15 p.m.) on the ninth book of the sixth Enneades of Plotinus¹. The following year (1902-1903) Bergson lectured on Aristotle's Physics (Saturdays) and on "L'Histoire de l'Idée du Temps" (Fridays)², while during 1903-1904 he analyzed "L'Histoire des théories de la mémoire"³. Raïssa Maritain records that Jacques was deemed by Bergson to be "celui de ses élèves qui comprenait et interprétait le mieux sa pensée" (p. 108).

Maritain never forgot these lessons. He was ever afterwards, along with Bergson, engaged in a struggle to the death with materialistic positivism and Kantianism, while a great part of his Thomism is a long argument to show that we can know the real world outside mind and beyond phenomena by the power of 'intuition'⁴.

At the time of the lectures, Maritain was certainly a thorough-going disciple of Bergson:

--- Il promenait dans les salles de cours la flamme révolutionnaire d'un socialisme ardent et de la philosophie de l'intuition (Les Grandes Amitiés, p. 108).

Socialism was then, and has always been considered to be, revolutionary, but it could equally well be maintained that to uphold spiritual values and the possibility of metaphysical knowledge in a largely hostile atmosphere (in the twentieth century) was just as 'revolutionary'.

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1. Information in Mélanges, p. 512. The content of the course on "L'Idée du Temps" is summarized on pp. 513-517.
 2. See Mélanges, pp. 614-625. In January 1903 Bergson published Introduction à la Métaphysique in the Revue de Morale et de Métaphysique.
 3. See Le Paysan de la Garonne (1st chapter) (Desclée de Brouwer, 1966).
 4. The details of this question, and the consonance and dissonance between Bergson and Maritain, are explored later.

Maritain's early enthusiasm for Bergson went so far as to shock the young R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., who took issue with him when he said (perhaps in jest) that, "la morale est une danse, qui se joue à travers toutes les formes du devenir sans jamais s'arrêter à aucune" (*Id.*, p. 108). Maritain and Garrigou-Lagrange later became close friends and collaborators in the Thomist revival. G. Van Riet has it that Maritain borrowed one of his major theses from Garrigou-Lagrange:

Comme le Père Garrigou-Lagrange, [Maritain] s'efforce sans cesse et dans tous ses écrits de garantir la valeur de notre connaissance conceptuelle et sa portée ontologique, en faisant appel à une 'intuition abstractive' de l'être ... (p. 351).

However,

Si M. Maritain emprunte au Père Garrigou-Lagrange l'idée centrale de son épistémologie, il l'enrichit cependant de manière considérable, tant par sa connaissance approfondie du système bergsonien que par sa méditation personnelle du mystère de l'être (p. 352).

The Maritains married on 26th November 1904 and lived in rue de Jussieu. Shortly afterwards, Maritain read Léon Bloy's La Femme Pauvre¹ and, being much moved by Bloy's own destitution, wrote to him enclosing 25 francs. After further correspondence, Bloy invited the Maritains to visit him, which they did on 25th June 1905. At the same time, Maritain obtained his Agrégation de Philosophie from the Sorbonne. As Bloy led the Maritains towards Christianity, Jacques began to renounce Bergson's teachings. After baptism at l'Eglise de Saint Jean in Montmartre on 11th June 1906, Maritain left the Sorbonne and obtained a grant² to study biology under Hans Driesch in Heidelberg. He was somewhat disillusioned with philosophy as a vocation and wrote of himself:

1. *Mercure de France*, 1st ed. 1897.

2. From the Michonis Fund.

L'auteur, après une jeunesse traversée par bien des influences, en particulier celle du bergsonisme ... avait pensé, une fois la lumière du Christ levée dans son coeur, laisser de côté les recherches de la sagesse humaine, dont les modernes représentants lui avaient convenablement démontré la vanité ... (Antimoderne, Ed. Revue des Jeunes, 1922, p. 13).

Fortunately, Maritain's conversion did not preclude further philosophical enquiry and, after his studies on the embryogenetic theory of neo-vitalism¹, he returned to Paris in 1908 to work for Hachette on the project of the Dictionnaire de Vie Pratique. His natural aptitude and appetite for philosophy, and the desire to increase his understanding of his new faith, led him to study St. Thomas Aquinas at Versailles under Père Humbert Clérissac, O.P. This work marked another turning-point in Maritain's intellectual life:

Il avait retrouvé, grâce à l'Ange de l'Ecole, dont l'amplissime doctrine avait achevé de le guérir du bergsonisme, et venait de lui manifester sa vocation intellectuelle (vae mihi, si non thomistizavero!) comme un nouveau printemps philosophique ... et une nouvelle ardeur de pensée ... (Antimoderne, pp. 13-14).

However, although Bergson's influence may have been consciously rejected in certain particulars, it still dominated Maritain's everyday life, because from 1911, when the article "L'Evolutionnisme de Bergson" appeared in La Revue de Philosophie (No. 19, pp. 467 ff.), up till 1914, Maritain was working on his first book, La Philosophie bergsonienne. An article written in 1913 also dealt with the Bergsonian theme of intuition, entitled "L'Intuition Au sens de connaissance instinctive ou d'inclination" (Revue de Philosophie, No. 24, pp. 601-625). Maritain adopted a largely hostile stance towards Bergson, in an effort to show his orthodoxy and to detach himself from

1. See Maritain's article, "Le néo-vitalisme en Allemagne et le darwinisme" (Revue de Philosophie, No. 6, 1910, pp. 417-444).

the attraction and temptation of Bergsonism. Thus, his gratitude to Bergson is expressed in largely negative terms:

M. Bergson a l'immense mérite d'avoir lutté seul (seul dans l'Université) pendant longtemps, contre le matérialisme soi-disant positif et contre le relativisme kantien qui se partageaient le monde officiel, et je me rappelle encore l'accent de réprobation avec lequel un de nos maîtres en Sorbonne, mort aujourd'hui, condamnait le 'mysticisme judéo-alexandrin', et, pour tout dire, le cléricalisme de cet admirateur de Plotin (La philosophie bergsonienne, p. 98).

This attitude leads Gerald Phelan (in Jacques Maritain, Sheed and Ward, N.Y., 1937) to accept that Bergson's philosophy only played the negative role of releasing Maritain from the 'errors' of modern philosophy in general: "Bergson's teaching revealed to Maritain the fallacy at the heart of rationalism, the failure of relativist philosophy and the necessity of an Absolute" (p. 2). The positive influence of Bergson is then largely passed over. Maritain's interest in the field of epistemology is chiefly to do with intuition (or how we know); he is also absorbed by the relation of time to eternity; by freedom (individual and corporate), by the relation between God and the world, and by theories of Art and creativity. The results of his researches along these lines sometimes differ from Bergson's in their conclusions, but Maritain undoubtedly saw the importance to modern man of the subjects with which Bergson was wrestling¹. It must be emphasized at this stage that Bergson exerted his greatest influence on Maritain in this way. Maritain adopted Bergson's subject-matter even in his analysis of Thomas Aquinas and, in doing so, changed the direction of Thomist preoccupations. This accords with G. Van Riet's

1. Henri Duméry (Philosophic Thought in France and the U.S., Ed. M. Farber, New York, 1950, p. 221) quite wrongly supposes that Maritain is "first and foremost a logician", deducing from this that he accordingly rejected Bergson's intuitionism and refused "to give the primacy to feeling".

assertion that Maritain brought back to Thomist enquiry a stress on our apprehension of the real and disregarded many other subjects in order to concentrate on this one:

On ne s'intéresse plus au problème de l'erreur; on se préoccupe très peu du scepticisme et du doute; on ne discute guère la définition de la vérité. L'attention se porte presque exclusivement sur une seule question: l'objectivité des idées (L'Epistémologie Thomiste, Bib. Phil. de Louvain, 1946, p. 375).

Dom Illtyd Trethowan, in "Some tendencies in modern Thomism" (Downside Review, No. 208, Spring 1949, pp. 147-159), considers that Thomism moved, in the early twentieth century, from 'essentialism' to 'existentialism' and to a preoccupation with awareness, and that this was, in large measure, due to Maritain's work.

Bergson's name recurs frequently throughout Maritain's writings. The philosophical dialogue between the two men went on in Maritain's mind all his life. In Le paysan de la Garonne (Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), Maritain singles out Bergson from all other philosophers of modern times. After the rationalists and positivists:

Il y a eu Bergson, qui, lui, ... ne prend pas place dans la lignée, il a voulu la briser ... Et après Bergson, tout le monde s'est remis avec entrain dans la lignée cartésienne, au fin bout de celle-ci... De tous les penseurs ... dont la lignée s'origine à Descartes, ... je ne conteste absolument qu'une seule chose ... c'est, sauf, naturellement, en ce qui regarde Bergson (et peut-être aussi Blondel), leur droit au nom de philosophes ... Ils ne sont pas des philosophes, ils sont des idéosophes ... (pp. 152-153).

Maritain's life after 1912 is less eventful; from 1912 to 1914 he taught at the Collège Stanislas, Paris. He then became Professeur at the Institut Catholique, where he remained until 1933, when he was appointed to be Professor of Philosophy at the Institute of Medieval

Studies, Toronto¹. This began a long association with America. After twelve years, he moved to the University of Chicago and then Notre Dame, Indiana. During this period (1945-1948), he was also acting as French Canadian Ambassador to the Vatican before becoming Professor at the University of Princeton (1948-1955), where he was made Professor Emeritus in 1956.

On his return to France, Maritain went to live with the 'petits frères de Jésus' at Toulouse² (in 1961); becoming a member in October 1970 and remaining there until his death in 1973 at the age of 91.

For Maritain, philosophy is formed in a hierarchy of truth and falsehood. Some philosophers (of any age) approach the Truth; others are misled. Absolute truth is most nearly attained in Thomas Aquinas. From this, it follows that Maritain believes in absolute truths and in the possibility of certain knowledge. For him, such truth is only to be gained through the Intelligence. It follows from this that any reality outside the mind is, first and foremost, intelligible. This is the first principle of Maritain's philosophy:

L'Être est l'objet propre de l'intelligence, et toute chose est intelligible dans la mesure où elle est
(Antimoderne, p. 164).

And again:

L'Intelligence a pour fin propre l'Être intelligible, pour besoin essentiel l'évidence, ou du moins la certitude, et ce n'est que pour atteindre cette fin qu'elle

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1. Except for 1916-1917 spent teaching at the Petit Séminaire, Versailles. He was invited to Toronto at the instigation of G. Phelan (President of the Institute) and Etienne Gilson (Professor of Medieval Philosophy). Gilson co-operated in the formation of the Institute in 1929 and acted as its director after the Second World War.
 2. An order devised by Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916), but only being put into practice after his death from 1933. The members sought to work in society at large but dwelt in community for prayer and fellowship.

use du moyen de la démonstration; elle a besoin de conviction bien plus que d'explication, elle a besoin de la réalité et non pas du discours (Antimoderne, p. 29).

This attitude to existence echoes throughout Maritain's career.

In 1947 he wrote:

L'existence n'est pas un simple fait empirique, mais une donnée primitive pour l'esprit lui-même et qui lui livre un champ supra-observable infini, bref la source première et surintelligible de l'intelligibilité (Court Traité de l'Existence, p. 41).

Later, in Le paysan de la Garonne (1966), the field of vision is narrower, but the premise still remains the same:

L'Intuition intellectuelle ... est le bien propre et sacré de l'intelligence comme telle; et c'est, avant tout, de l'intuition absolument première sans laquelle il n'y a pas de savoir philosophique: l'intuition de l'être (p. 164, italics in original).

The twin touchstones of Maritain's philosophy are, first, this stress on intelligibility and, secondly, a stress on real existence as observed. Maritain calls this 'l'être!', and Bergson calls it 'la vie' (of which 'la durée' is a part). Maritain rooted Thomas Aquinas's philosophy firmly in existence. Both Maritain and Bergson accused other philosophers of severing the mind from existence. Bergson argued that Kant had ruled out the possibility of an intuition of Being¹, while Maritain not only attacked modern philosophers but also distinguished his own Thomism from other "courants scolastiques non thomistes ou prétendument thomistes" (Court Traité de l'Existence, p. 10). What they lack is "précisément la primauté que le thomisme authentique reconnaît à l'existence et à l'intuition de l'être existentiel" (Ibid.).

The reason why such an obsession dominates Maritain's philosophy is simply that modern philosophers had failed to understand our indebtedness

1. See E.C., pp. 798-802.

to experience and to a direct apprehension of the fullness and depth of Being. Even in the case of modern existentialism, awareness and experience are vitiated by a false conception of intelligence. In Maritain's opinion, it is the supreme virtue of intelligence to apprehend and to interpret existence. Modern existentialism, on the other hand:

affirme la primauté de l'existence, mais comme détruisant ou supprimant les essences ou natures, et comme manifestant une suprême défaite de l'intelligence et de l'intelligibilité ... supprimez l'essence, ou ce que pose l'esse, vous supprimez du même coup l'existence ou l'esse, ces deux notions sont corrélatives et inséparables ... (Id., p. 13).

If the essence of an existent - that is, its nature or significance - is suppressed, its very existence is simultaneously negated. If 'essence' is suppressed, "l'existence n'actue rien, ... j'existe mais ne suis rien ... l'homme existe mais ... il n'y a pas de nature humaine" (p. 18). But 'essence' in Maritain's philosophy can only be known through existence and not merely as an abstract concept. The observation of existence and its intelligibility are the two hinges on which the whole of Maritain's theory hangs. If existence were not intelligible, we could not 'know' at all, for we know only through intelligence. Conversely, if it were argued that we know by another faculty, such knowledge would be incomprehensible and meaningless, for it is the very nature of our knowledge to grasp meaning or significance - this is intelligent knowledge by definition, and, apart from it, we cannot 'know' in any real sense at all. Thus essence, or meaning, is what existence implies for the mind: "Veritas sequitur esse rerum" (p. 23). Accordingly, Maritain's philosophy can be summed up in this way: "L'être est l'objet propre de l'intelligence, et toute chose est intelligible dans la mesure où elle est" (Antimoderne, p. 164).

Having established these points, it is easy to see why Maritain attacked Bergson in La Philosophie bergsonienne. There are two main bones of contention

and they arise from Maritain's two great cornerstones. First, Bergson had wrongly identified 'la durée réelle' with existence itself (Being). He had done this by substituting the verb 'devenir' for the verb 'être' and had undermined the substantial nature of existence, following a new logic: "Je me perçois durant, je suis, je suis durée" (p. 7). Maritain insists that Being "n'est pas à chercher dans le temps - ni dans l'instant, ni dans le flux, ni dans la concentration du temps - mais dans l'intemporel" (p. LXXXV).

Secondly, Maritain points out that Bergson mounted a severe critique of the ability of the intelligence to know real existence (in flux). In this way, Bergson's philosophy ruins, "de fond en comble, toute connaissance intellectuelle de la vérité" (p. 117). Bergson "interdit à l'intelligence la connaissance de notre réalité foncière, connaissance intuitive de l'existence, connaissance rationnelle de la nature de notre moi" (pp. 129-130). As for Bergson's own conception of the intelligence, Maritain counters: "l'intelligence n'a pas pu s'adapter à notre pratique, elle ne peut s'adapter qu'à l'être" (p. 140).

All of the other faults of Bergson's philosophy spring from these two misconceptions. For example, Bergson's so-called 'nominalism' and 'empiricism' arise from the fact that "il n'y a donc de différence d'ordre ou de nature entre la connaissance intellectuelle et la connaissance sensible, entre l'idée et la sensation ou l'image" (p. 137, italics in original). Our knowledge in that case would derive "toute entière de la seule sensibilité, de la faculté de sentir et d'imaginer" (p. 137)¹.

1. Maritain might appear to be contradicting St. Thomas's unequivocal assertion in De Veritate, q. 10, a.5.c. (and elsewhere), that our knowledge does in fact derive from sense experience. He supports St. Thomas's view later, however (e.g. in Sept Leçons, 1934; see my account later in this chapter).

Maritain's attack had a widespread impact on the Catholic world, as seen in Chapter Three, but there is a little known reverse-side to Maritain's approach in La philosophie bergsonienne. His concern is not only to deride and denounce. He makes a number of subtle and fine points about Bergson's insights. For instance, he does recognize the importance of Bergson's attribution of time to real existence: "Le trait de génie de M. Bergson, ç'a été de voir que si la science des phénomènes enveloppe et dissimule elle-même dans son ordre propre et dans son objet formel une étoffe métaphysique, cette étoffe ne peut être que le temps" (p. LXXDV). This is of course not entirely complimentary, because Maritain would say that the philosopher of metaphysics must reach beyond the world of phenomena.

On the second point - the critique of the intelligence - Maritain makes a further point that "la critique bergsonienne du concept vise avant tout un certain usage scientifique du concept, mais de fait atteint à vif le concept lui-même et l'intelligence lui-même" (p. LXXVIII). The scientific use of the concept that Maritain has in mind is specified as "cette intelligence mutilée des philosophes modernes" (p. 69).

Maritain does not dwell long on this vital distinction in La philosophie bergsonienne but brings out all its implications and ramifications in a contemporary article called "La Science Moderne et la Raison"¹. In this article Maritain separates intelligence into 'raison' and pure 'intelligence'. 'Intelligence' grasps reality as it presents itself to the mind; 'raison' then interprets this material and classifies it by its logical association with other ideas - in short, 'raison' conceptualizes the given data. If, in

1. Revue de Philosophie, No. 6, 1910, pp. 575-603; reprinted in Antimoderne (1922), from which quotations here are taken.

this way, 'raison' conceptualizes what is known at first hand, then it is prone to error and to subjective interpretation: only 'intelligence' can 'know' in a simple act - objectively:

Un intellect intuitif, appréhendant la réalité sans mouvement logique ni composition de concepts, ne saurait tomber dans l'erreur; mais un entendement discursif, comme est l'entendement humain a, par cela même qu'il est discursif, la possibilité de se tromper ... (p. 36).

The use of the word 'intuitif' here is worthy of note, because it is used in the sense of a pure spiritual apprehension, with the addendum that this is not the normal capacity or procedure of man's intelligence. Such an interpretation would be in keeping with Thomas Aquinas's use of the word 'intuitus', which means God's knowledge of us (intrinsically authentic and full) and not our knowledge at all. However, Maritain, following Bergson, then proceeds to employ 'intuition' and 'intuitif' elsewhere in this article to mean the mind's immediate apprehension of things outside itself. This second use becomes increasingly commonplace in Maritain later, as will be seen.

However, the main point of Maritain's article is the distinction of mind into two faculties. He explains that modern philosophers have misinterpreted 'intelligence' or mind in general to mean just 'raison'. Thus, instead of using the intelligence to perceive things as they are - in their own life - they reverse the process of mind from 'intuition' to 'raison' and work by first applying concepts and theories (constructed by 'raison') to life and in this way impose interpretations on the primordial sense data: "les modernes ont complètement intraverti les deux termes de cette distinction" (p. 30). A similar confusion between the two faculties is highlighted in Le Paysan de la Garonne (Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), in which Maritain speaks of modern philosophers' tendency to have recourse to 'raison' for proof

of the validity of experience:

Tandis que disparaît de notre univers de culture l'idée de la connaissance philosophique authentique, et que s'éclipse le régime de la vérité à contempler, l'éblouissant avènement de la science moderne avec son langage symbolique ... et de cette mathématisation de l'observable ... qui ... place l'esprit sous le régime de la vérification à opérer, porte tout le monde à croire que la science - la science des phénomènes - est absolument seule à pouvoir nous apporter une connaissance rationnelle certaine (p. 30).

So, for Maritain, such philosophers replace meditation on experience with analysis of experience in rational terms alone.

Where is the origin of Maritain's distinction between discursive and intuitive intelligence? It is present in Thomas Aquinas, but in 1910, when Maritain wrote his article, it was a little known and less employed part of his philosophy. Yet Maritain grants to this division of mind primary importance in his own confrontation of 'true' philosophy with 'modern' aberrations.

Bergson uses the words 'analyse' and 'intuition' in Introduction à la Métaphysique (1903, p. 1395 ff.) to describe exactly the same aspects of mind as Maritain's 'raison' and 'intelligence':

Analyser consiste ... à exprimer une chose en fonction de ce qui n'est pas elle. Toute analyse est ainsi une traduction, un développement en symboles, une représentation prises de points de vue successifs (pp. 1395-1396),

while, on the other hand, "il suit de là qu'un absolu ne saurait être donné que dans une intuition" (p. 1395). Bergson does rather unfortunately alter his vocabulary for L'Evolution Créatrice four years later, where the conceptual and discursive powers of mind are called 'intelligence'¹. The 'intelligence' fabricates hypotheses, schemas and abstract systems of ideas:

1. See, e.g., p. 674: this question is considered in Chapter Two at length.

Toutes ces analyses tendent à résoudre les lois de la nature en autant de systèmes d'analogies. Toute intégration de ce genre est une illusion de l'esprit qui conclut, de ce que nous pouvons classer des termes donnés sous des rubriques de moins en moins nombreuses, qu'on pourra enfin subsumer la totalité des choses soit à un concept unique, soit à deux concepts coordonnés l'un à l'autre ("Rapport sur Le Pluralisme de J.-H. Boex-Borel", Mélanges, p. 795).

Maritain comes to a remarkably similar conclusion himself in "La science moderne et la raison", judging that the separation of 'raison' from the external world can easily lead to "des grandeurs abstraites et des modèles idéaux" (p. 48). These then bear little relation to reality:

L'unité ne peut jamais venir de la juxtaposition et de la cimentation artificielle de ce qui nous est donné séparément; et c'est pour cette raison que toutes ces tentatives de la 'philosophie des sciences' sont inopérantes. L'unité ne peut venir que d'une vérité d'un autre ordre qui domine sans forcément les contenir, les vérités qui nous sont données à part (p. 50).

Both Maritain and Bergson have in their sights the positivist and rationalist philosophies which compose systems of thought joined by logic alone, while remaining sceptical about our knowledge of anything beyond 'ideas'. Maritain maintains that such an approach cannot "saisir l'unité, ni la simplicité, ni la continuité, ni le mouvement, ni la vie, ni la durée, ni l'éternité, ni l'être, ni une cause, ni une fin" (p. 57). The vocabulary is singularly and undeniably Bergsonian. Bergson's philosophy is the very philosophy which speaks of the need to understand the heterogeneity and movement of all things in life and of the absence of movement, life and 'durée' in conceptual systems like that of Aristotle.

Where Maritain obviously differs from Bergson is in his early use of the word 'intelligence' in place of Bergson's 'intuition' and of 'raison' for Bergson's 'intelligence'. Clearly, this places their respective uses of the word 'intelligence' in diametrical opposition. Neither is such an opposition merely a matter of vocabulary alone. Whereas Bergson's 'intuition'

is non-intellectual, Maritain claims that nothing can be known apart from the intellect and, in fact, we know what we know only as 'mind', 'idea' or 'essence' and not in its separate existence at all.

To complicate the issue even more, Bergson uses the term 'connaissance' in two ways (at least); first, to indicate knowledge of a material object (in its existence as well as its nature). In this area, intelligence is efficient:

la connaissance pratique est véritablement une connaissance de la réalité en soi, de la réalité absolue, là où elle réside dans son domaine à elle. Ainsi l'intelligence, qui a pour rôle de maîtriser la matière inorganisée, est capable de connaître absolument (quoique incomplètement) cette matière (Mélanges, pp. 1147-1148, letter to H. Höffding of 15.3.1915).

The second type of absolute knowledge is of spiritual natures - complex 'essences'; for example, that of a personality as a whole known in a simple act: in an intuition,

le personnage me serait donné tout d'un coup dans son intégralité, et les mille incidents qui le manifestent, au lieu de s'ajouter à l'idée et de l'enrichir, me sembleraient au contraire se détacher d'elle, sans pourtant en épuiser ou en appauvrir l'essence (p. 1394).

The normal object of 'intuition' in Bergson's system is 'la durée' or 'la mobilité de la durée' (Oeuvres, p. 1416). This is a separation of material from spiritual; in other words, is knowledge of 'essence' or spiritual nature.

This second intuition is closer to Maritain's 'intuition abstractive' or 'intuition intellectuelle', which is the mind's grasp of its object in its essence. Maritain does, however, draw attention to the difference between this intuition and Bergson's:

Celle-ci se présente comme n'étant pas de nature intellectuelle. Or, ce que nous disons, c'est que ce qui par excellence est objet d'intuition c'est l'être, mais objet d'intuition intellectuelle. Nous sommes en réalité très loin du bergsonisme. L'être procure une telle intuition non pas à cette sorte de sympathie exigeant une torsion de la volonté sur elle-même dont parle M. Bergson, c'est à l'intelligence que l'être

procure une telle intuition, par le moyen d'un concept, d'une idée ... (Sept Leçons sur l'être, P. Téqui, 1934, pp. 54-55).

However, given that Bergson regards mind as irreducible to matter and of a quite different nature, it must be the case that knowledge for Bergson is immaterial or 'metaphysical'; therefore 'idea' in some form.

The argument really appears to revolve around the fact that Bergson introduces impure elements into 'intelligence', such as the involvement of the will and the senses. It is true that for Bergson understanding stems directly from perception and insight from a real effort of will¹, but, on the other hand, understanding is seen in terms of mind throughout "L'Effort Intellectuel", while pure attention or sense perception is only viewed as a starting point:

Il y a ici une caractéristique intellectuelle de l'effort intellectuel. Il est vrai que, si cette caractéristique existe pour les représentations d'ordre complexe et élevé, on doit en retrouver quelque chose dans des états plus simples. Il n'est donc pas impossible que nous en découvriions des traces jusque dans l'attention sensorielle elle-même, encore que cet élément n'y joue plus qu'un rôle accessoire et effacé (p. 931).

It seems that Maritain is so concerned to uphold the unique qualities of intelligence that he separates it too rigidly from all other faculties in the process of knowing. His intellectualism is further underlined in Réflexions sur l'Intelligence (Nouvelle Lib. Nat., 1926), where it is stated that intelligence - and not the will² - moves towards "l'acte de foi sur-naturelle" (p. 6). Knowledge, or "une identité absolue entre l'être et la pensée" (p. 13), is achieved by intelligence, and through abstraction: "Elle

1. See "La perception du changement", pp. 1365-1392, and "L'Effort intellectuel", pp. 930-959.

2. The will does, nonetheless, play 'un rôle essentiel' (p. 6).

travaille sur ce que sont les choses, c'est en elle un monde d'essences universelles, tel le monde des nombres dans l'intelligence du mathématicien" (p. 13, italics in original). This knowledge is therefore at once direct but deficient.

However, it must be understood that for Maritain, as for Bergson, knowledge is rooted not in a process of logic, nor in the analytical identification of an experience, nor in any 'process' at all - but simply in apprehension. The consequences of this discovery are signal when Maritain broaches knowledge of a purely metaphysical kind, for in that domain direct intuition holds the key to knowledge. In other words, in knowing God it is experience which is solicited, and not simply knowledge about God. Gradually Maritain comes to regard all knowledge as a deepening of our observation of the real and not simply a sharpening of our analysis of what is true: "Je peux savoir par la raison que Dieu existe, mais à condition de partir de l'être que je touche et que je vois" (Id., p. 20).

Now, it could be argued that to know something apart from its existence is not to know in any real sense at all, and Maritain himself admits that knowledge in the intelligence only yields knowledge about the mind's existence and not the existence of the object. The object exists as 'concept'. The word 'concept' is, however, being used here in an entirely different way from Bergson's use. Maritain's 'concept' is not a 'représentation'; it is a sign - that which points to and takes its life and form from something else. It is "un signe dont tout l'essence est de signifier" (Distinguer pour Unir, Desclée de Brouwer et Cie., 1932, p. 232). It is no more and no less than a 'signe': "il consiste en un pur 'faisant connaître'" (p. 771). There is therefore no intelligible content to this type of concept apart from its object:

C'est la relation de signe elle-même, qui, pour avoir la

pureté et l'efficacité requises dans cet univers incomparable qu'est l'univers du connaître, requiert la relation d'identité (sous le rapport du constitutif intelligible) (p. 771).

This relation of identity between a concept in the mind and its object outside mind which Maritain simply calls 'concept' relates closely to Bergson's 'image'; that is to say, the physical object in the guise of a mental perception¹.

There is also another 'image' in Bergson's philosophy. In this second instance, 'image' means the material representation of something mental. He explains it as follows:

On passera du plan supérieur où tout était ramassé dans une seule représentation, à des plans de moins en moins élevés, de plus en plus voisins de la sensation, où la représentation simple est éparpillée en images, où les images se développent en phrases et en mots ... ("L'Effort Intellectuel", p. 936).

Maritain takes full account of the Bergsonian uses of the word 'image' in his own treatise on 'le signe' in Quatre Essais sur l'esprit (1st pub. 1939, q. from Alsatia, ed. 1956). In this chapter we are only concerned with the philosophical uses of the word 'signe' (and not aesthetic ones)². Whole sections of Maritain's book are devoted to discussions of Bergson's theories and it is obvious that Bergson has spurred and prompted Maritain to define his own position.

The first function of 'le signe' for Maritain is as a 'formal cause' or 'objective cause' (as opposed to 'efficient cause') of the knowledge of 'what is'. Maritain differentiates between 'le signe' and 'l'image' in this way: "Toute image n'est pas signe, et tout signe n'est pas image ...

1. See Matière et Mémoire, p. 161.

2. See Chapter Eight for aesthetic uses of 'l'image'.

bien des signes ne sont pas des images (la fumée n'est pas l'image du feu ni le cri de la douleur)" (pp. 64-65). Maritain sees a close relationship between the idea of 'le signe' and its meaning:

La naissance de l'idée ... semble liée à la découverte de la valeur de signification d'un signe. L'animal use de signes sans percevoir la relation de signification (p. 69).

In the French, of course, the words 'signe' and 'signification' are cognate, and Maritain takes cognizance of this fact. The 'signe' for Maritain has, above all, an intellectual content, and Maritain accuses Bergson of confusion because he fails to recognize this. He muddles the distinction between 'l'image' as exact representation of the signified and 'le signe' as evocative symbol of the signified. His "feuilles mortes sur l'eau d'un étang" (L'Essai, p. 90) obviously cannot be a literal 'image' in the sense of 'représentation'; it is related intellectually to its object and is only indirectly representative of what it describes.

The above type of image occurs frequently in Bergson's works, and nowhere more often than in L'Evolution Créatrice, where his persistent use of the phrase "Tout se passe comme si ..." preceded an image of just the type Maritain means.

What does Maritain's analysis reveal? Surely that, if the intellect can form a single concept from a complex reality, then the imagination intrudes or intervenes to some extent. He admits that the subconscious mind is dominated by the imagination (see p. 83) but, if the conscious mind also tends to construe reality in symbolic or poetic form, it must also allow some function to the imagination. Maritain does concede that the imagination can initiate a process leading to knowledge but clings to the doctrine that, in the final analysis:

les sensations, les images, les idées sont solaires,

engagées dans le psychisme lumineux et régulier de l'intelligence et de ses lois de gravitation (p. 84).

If Bergson's 'image' is an imaginative creation and no more it can bear no relation whatever to the truth except by analogy, by an interpretation through the intelligence (see pp. 85-88). The image cannot actually be the reality itself, and Maritain accuses Bergson of falling into the trap of believing this (p. 90). In other words, the important difference between Maritain and Bergson remains the fact that, for Bergson, an 'image' in the mind is inseparable from the existence of the object reflected, whereas, for Maritain, only the essence of the object is the same both outside and inside the mind:

Ce n'est pas une image ou un portrait de la chose, ni une forme vide, c'est la chose même, c'est la nature même, qui est à la fois dans la chose pour exister et dans le concept pour être perçue (p. 20).

There is a third intellectual faculty - in addition to 'ratio' and 'intellectus' - or 'raison' and 'intelligence' - which Maritain calls 'le jugement', and this provides Maritain with something of a solution to the impasse over existence. Maritain sees the 'jugement' as the reconciling agency between existence and essence: its function consists in:

faire passer à l'esprit du plan de la simple essence, ou du simple objet signifié à la pensée, au plan de la chose ou du sujet détenant l'existence (actuellement ou possiblement), et dont l'objet de pensée prédicat et l'objet de pensée sujet sont des aspects intelligibles (Distinguer pour Unir, 1932, pp. 188-189).

Therefore, whereas the concept is related to essence, "le jugement a rapport à l'existence (actuelle ou possible)" (Réflexions sur l'intelligence, 1926, p. 23).

It could be objected here with justification that, even though 'le jugement', by reflection, affirms existence, it is still operating through

the process of abstraction and can only affirm the idea of existence and that only subjectively. Maritain himself acknowledges that 'le jugement' is "un mouvement logique immanent à l'esprit et progressant à partir d'un principe avec nécessité; en lui le connaître apparaît comme un développement de la pensée suivant les lois inflexibles de la connexion des concepts" (Id., p. 152, my underlining).

How then, if at all, is existence known directly? Maritain's philosophy does contain a second theory of intuition, which he calls 'l'intuition des sens' (p. 20). Sensations are simply described as "l'existence actuellement exercée" (p. 20). They are caused by external existence impressing itself upon the senses. Thus, Maritain recognizes "le rôle capital, à ce point de vue, de l'expérience sensible, du contact charnel avec les choses" (p. 20). All the same, Maritain does not grant to the senses any capacity to know - such a thing would be absurd to him. The senses intuit an object in its action, not in its essence: i.e. "les choses en tant qu'elles sont en acte d'existence" (p. 18).

Even so, Maritain comes to realize that all types of knowledge and even judgement itself are dependent on the senses. The senses have a primary role to play in the acquisition of knowledge, for they render to the mind both the matter of any concept and the matter of any judgement:

Tout jugement doit, d'une manière ou d'une autre, se résoudre finalement en eux, [les sens], autrement dit la res sensibilis visibilis est la pierre de touche de l'existentialité (Sept leçons sur l'être, 1934, pp. 29-30).

This is so:

non seulement parce que les sens ... sont indispensables à la science, et à la science la plus dégagée et immatérielle, pour revenir sur l'existence actuelle qu'elle ne peut pas ignorer ni négliger; c'est une existence corruptible: elle ne l'atteint qu'indirectement, en sortant de sa sphère propre et par le ministère des sens (p. 30).

In the Sept leçons sur l'être Maritain accords considerable time and space to the discussion of sensations and gives clear expression at last to the fact that all intellectual intuition comes via the senses. However, there are not separate intuitions so much as three stages in the apprehension of an object - for, from existence as sense data, the object becomes concept and is then confirmed (retrospectively) in its existence by the judgement.

In Distinguer pour Unir (1932) as well as in De Bergson à Thomas d'Aquin (1944) (Eds. de la Maison française, N.Y.), Maritain narrows his criticism of Bergson to a criticism of empirical knowledge as final and ultimate knowledge. Bergson's restoration of temporal existence to the object of intuition was considered to be a part of this reinstatement of 'empiricism', which could serve metaphysics in restoring to it a greater realism, but could undermine it by substituting Time for Being. So Bergson paradoxically restores to philosophy a sense of the real and yet makes of time passing an idol. Metaphysical theories could not be built entirely on empirical evidence, which was only part of total creation and which was so dependent on the scientific theories of a particular age. Speaking of the findings of Les deux sources, Maritain says this:

Une espèce de scission manichéenne est ... la rançon d'une conception tout empiriciste, pour qui agir ne peut être que céder à une force qui contraint ou qui attire: seule la raison, principe d'un univers moral distinct de l'obéissance sociale de l'élan mystique, peut reconnaître, en fonction des lois propres de cet univers, l'ordre qui subordonne le social au mystique et les concilie du même coup (De Bergson à Thomas d'Aquin, Ed. de la Maison française, N.Y., 1944, p. 63, italics in original).

Maritain's argument is rather unfair, since Bergson's aim is not to construct a metaphysical framework but to observe moral and religious behaviour in action.

Although Maritain's other criticisms of Bergson have already been

encountered in La Philosophie bergsonienne, the criticism is not unmitigated in the later work and there is certainly a new tone evident. For example, Maritain writes in general terms: "l'on ne saurait trop marquer l'importance du renouvellement dont la pensée moderne est ainsi redevable à Bergson" (p. 60). And, more significantly, Maritain actually agrees with one of Bergson's basic hypotheses about the nature of life by accepting that reality is not:

une répétition d'événements identiques. La réalité n'est pas cette concaténation d'immobilités et d'éléments tout faits, sans densité ontologique interne ni tendentialité ni puissance interne d'expansion, qu'imagine le mécanisme (p. 19).

Furthermore, at the end of the book, there is a truly remarkable attempt at reconciliation between Bergson and St. Thomas Aquinas:

Ce maître [i.e. Bergson] qui m'avait éveillé au désir métaphysique ... a eu la générosité de ne pas me tenir rigueur de ces critiques, qui atteignaient pourtant ce qu'un philosophe a de plus cher, ses idées. Quelques années avant sa mort il écrivait qu'ayant peu fréquenté saint Thomas, il s'était néanmoins, chaque fois qu'il avait rencontré un texte de lui sur son chemin, trouvé d'accord avec lui, et qu'il admettait fort bien qu'on situât sa philosophie dans le prolongement de saint Thomas (p. 85).

Maritain then adds that, as for his own attitude to Bergson, "nous nous sommes retrouvés en quelque sorte au milieu de la route" (p. 85).

In some way or other, it seems likely that Maritain must have come to the point of reassessing his own position with regard to Bergson, and to have drawn closer to him. After all the hostility of the early days the beginnings of a change of mind on Maritain's part are apparent as early as 1926, in Réflexions sur l'Intelligence, where he considers that Bergson "avait pu, lui aussi, s'il avait voulu, appeler son intuition intelligence et se présenter en défenseur de l'intellect" (p. 93). Or again, in the same work, Maritain speaks of knowledge as the process of becoming the object:

En connaissant je ne deviens pas autre, je deviens l'autre, et il y a tout un monde entre ces deux formules. Nous disions tout à l'heure que l'acte immanent de connaître consiste à être ou devenir; ajoutons qu'il consiste à être ou devenir l'autre en tant qu'autre. Voilà le mystère propre de la connaissance (pp. 52-53, italics in original).

In Maritain's theory, the intelligence, being spiritual, becomes the other 'immaterially' (p. 53) or by 'connaturalité' (p. 89). Maritain explains that this is not intellectual knowledge as such, but "connaissance par mode d'inclination" (p. 88) or "connaissance par connaturalité amoureuse" (p. 89). This knowledge is akin to mystical knowledge (p. 89). According to Van Riet (in L'Epistémologie Thomiste) this is Maritain's main original contribution to neo-Thomist epistemology. Having elucidated this, Maritain takes another step:

L'intelligence n'est vraiment intelligence que si l'amour est là pour spécifier son opération. Elle n'est vraiment intelligence que si elle n'agit pas d'une manière purement intellectuelle (p. 93).

In giving credence to this possible alternative form of knowledge, Maritain rejoins the stream of thought influenced by Rousselot, Maréchal and Blondel, for all of whom a man knows most surely when all his faculties combine, depending on each other for completion and fulfilment. Bergson calls this combination of faculties 'l'âme' all through Matière et Mémoire, while in "Le bon sens et les études classiques" he characterizes 'le bon sens' as "le rayonnement intellectuel d'un foyer moral intense, la justesse des idées se moulant sur le sentiment de la justice, enfin l'esprit redressé par le caractère" (Mélanges, p. 365). He explains that this is due to the fact that "l'action et la pensée me paraissent avoir une source commune, qui n'est ni pure volonté, ni pure intelligence, et cette source est le bon sens" (p. 365).

Maritain took a second major step in Bergson's direction in accepting

that the intuition of the self is not abstractive (as is the intuition of external objects), but is experimental; that is, is apprehended in its action and existence. This point is clearly made in Distinguer pour Unir (1932) and Maritain here acknowledges his debt to Bergson:

Est-ce que l'on doit hier l'existence de toute expérience métaphysique? Nous ne le croyons pas, du moins à bien entendre ce mot (ainsi peut-on rejoindre quelques-unes des vues de M. Bergson). Etant esprits par la meilleure partie de nous-mêmes, nous pouvons avoir une expérience des choses de l'esprit, même en restant sur le plan naturel. C'est ainsi que non seulement nous connaissons expérimentalement l'existence de notre âme et celle de notre libre arbitre, mais que nous pouvons aussi accéder à une certaine perception expérimentale obscure de la liberté même de l'esprit en nous, de sa transcendance par rapport à tout l'univers matériel, ou encore ... du néant immanent à tout ce qui est créé (pp. 551-552).

This corresponds to Bergson's conviction that we know our own 'moi profond', 'moi intérieur' or the 'durée' of our own being. Dom I. Trethowan pointed out to me that 'la durée réelle' might well mean something approximate to 'being-in-time' or 'action in concrete existence' rather than merely 'time passing' or 'the substance of things', as Maritain construes Bergson's meaning (Conversation of 11.3.75). Maritain himself appears to grasp something of this meaning in Sept leçons (1934), when he speaks of "l'exemple bergsonien de l'expérience de la durée" (p. 57). He continues:

Il y a là une expérience authentique, dans certaines limites. La durée apparaît alors comme le mouvement vécu où, à un niveau plus profond que celui de la conscience, nos états psychiques se fondent dans une multiplicité virtuelle mais une cependant, et par où nous sentons que nous avançons dans le temps, que nous durons en changeant, d'une manière indivisée et qui pourtant nous enrichit qualitativement et triomphe de l'inertie de la matière. Il y a là une expérience psychologique qui n'est pas encore l'intuition métaphysique de l'être, mais qui ~~aurait~~ pu conduire à cette intuition, car enveloppée dans cette durée psychologique, implicitement donnée là, il y a bien l'existence, l'irréductible valeur de l'esse; c'est donc une voie, un cheminement vers la perception de l'existence (pp. 57-58).

It is important to note that here the use of 'perception' as synonymous with 'intuition' is Bergsonian, as in "La Perception du Changement" (pp. 1365-1392). Secondly, it is crucial to see that the intuition of self is more than an abstractive intuition of quiddity or essence. Its basis is knowledge of existence in time. Maritain therefore accepts the Bergsonian account of intuition of self in all its fullness. This is not to say that Maritain abandons or rejects abstractive intuition - he allots to it a different object.

Towards the end of his career, Maritain wrote Le Paysan de la Garonne (1966) and also two articles in La Revue Thomiste dealing in detail with the intuition of existence per se¹. In Le Paysan de la Garonne, Maritain states that we intuit certain complex unities at a pre-conscious level; things like good and evil, moral obligation, justice and law and even extra-mental realities - truth; the distinction between substance and accident and the principle of identity. These are closely allied to instincts:

Intuitions primitives nées dans le préconscient de l'esprit ... obscurément perçues par l'instinct de l'esprit (pp. 28-29).

Maritain further accepts unequivocally the fact that in attaining 'la durée réelle' Bergson actually attained existence, and not just 'time passing'. In other words, Bergson's 'durée réelle' is not simply time, but relates to real existence which necessarily includes and involves time:

J'ai dit que l'intuition intellectuelle de l'être n'a rien à voir avec l'intuition bergsonienne, qui gâtait un anti-intellectualisme à vrai dire très accidentel, et que Bergson décrivait comme une sorte d'ineffable sympathie exigeant une torsion de la volonté vers elle-

1. Namely "Réflexions sur la nature blessée et sur l'intuition de l'être" (No. 68, 1968, pp. 5-40) and "Il n'y a pas de savoir sans intuitivité" (No. 70, 1970, pp. 30-71).

même; et surtout, elle ne portait directement sur l'être, mais seulement sur une durée qui n'est qu'un des aspects de l'être. Cela dit, il faut ajouter qu'à travers la durée c'est l'esse que de fait, et sans se le dire, il atteignait en réalité, et qu'en tout cas le thomisme lui doit une fière chandelle, car si l'intuition de l'être n'a rien à voir avec son intuition, c'est cependant grâce à l'impact de son intuition, et de son génie métaphysique, sur la pensée moderne ... que les thomistes contemporains ont enfin reconnu ... l'importance essentielle et absolument primordiale de l'intuition de l'être dans leur propre philosophie. A ce point de vue on doit considérer Bergson comme un grand libérateur (pp. 205-206).

In the 1968 article ("Réflexions sur la nature blessée et sur l'intuition de l'être"), Maritain sees a deficiency in Aristotle's treatment of the intuition of Being. Aristotle implies such an intuition but it is not articulated coherently: "Il n'a pas été capable de la dégager pour elle-même et d'en faire vivre sa doctrine explicitement formulée" (p. 17). Maritain then proceeds to explain the unique quality and importance of this intuition of existence. It is not knowledge:

par mode d'essence, c'est-à-dire au moyen d'une idée
issue de l'opération abstractive,

but rather

dans le cas unique dont je parle ... l'idée ou
concept (d'existence) ne précède pas le jugement
(d'existence), elle vient après lui et provient
de lui (pp. 17-18).

The intuition remains a judgement, but "d'un autre type que tous les autres jugements" (p. 18). It is unique in the one way that really matters; that is, it attains (knows) existence as well as essence: "Par elle je plonge dans le monde de l'exister, en m'évadant du monde des essences et de leurs relations" (p. 18). Existence is not then an attribute added (through a posterior intellectual judgement) to the subject; it is the subject itself, "dans le réel extra-mental" (p. 18). The metaphor of perception is again employed (as in Bergson):

C'est pour l'intelligence saisir intuitivement, ou voir, au sein de l'intimité spirituelle de sa propre opération, l'être, l'exister, l'esse extra-mental de ce sujet, voilà l'intuition de l'être (p. 18).

Intelligence, in this one case, can perceive Being as it exists in time. It then afterwards reflects and forms concepts about its subject. This takes place in a second and secondary 'acte judicatif', which Maritain also calls a "second concept d'existence" (p. 18). This is abstractive and 'essential'. The intuition of existence is, however, "d'autre origine dans l'esprit que le concept, exprimé par le mot 'existence', qui provient dans l'esprit, non d'un jugement, mais de l'opération abstractive ..." (p. 18). There are hence two forms of existence in the mind - the first as 'vision', the second as 'abstraction':

l'exister saisi par l'intuition de l'être est un intelligible qui n'est pas tiré des phantasmes par l'opération abstractive. C'est l'intelligible par excellence que l'intelligence est faite pour voir, mais qu'elle ne voit que dans l'intuition de l'être, qui est une intuition métaphysique (p. 20).

Maritain next analyzes the mechanics of the first intuition of being. He makes a radically new effort to understand the intimate liaison between the senses and the intelligence. He cites the example of the eye giving intelligence its data. He then goes on to say that, when a rose is seen, its colour, etc., are given, but so is its existence, so that "l'intelligence prend conscience, non seulement de la couleur de la rose ... mais du voir cette rose, autrement dit l'acte cognitif lui-même du sens externe" (p. 21). The existence of the rose can be rendered as "cette rose est ..." (p. 21), while the abstract idea of existence affirms that "la rose est là" (p. 21). The distinction is like that between the German 'Sein' and 'Dasein'.

There is even a third stage in the apprehension of existence after both intuition and abstraction, and in this third way Maritain again rejoins

Bergson. The third stage is a sudden realization of the nature of the intuition:

Alors l'éclair de l'intuition de l'être jaillit tout à coup, et l'exister de la rose ... se dévoile comme objet explicitement saisi ... non par une species ... mais par intentio intelligens, je veux dire par un acte ... qui, posant dans l'esprit la rose comme posée en elle-même hors de l'esprit, porte du même coup l'exister de la rose à l'état de spiritualité en acte, et du même coup le fait voir (p. 22).

Maritain has Bergson in mind as he writes this, for he adds that Bergson indeed knew about the intuition of existence, but, like Aristotle, "d'une manière encore incomplète et déficiente" (p. 30). Maritain reiterates his old charge that Bergson replaces 'être' by 'durée' and, in so doing, disguises the real nature of his intuition. In addition, Bergson does not expound in a logical, formal manner the intellectual nature of intuition. So the original objections to Bergson still stand, while, at the same time, all the potential and hidden riches of his philosophy are freely acknowledged to have had great influence on Maritain's own thought.

To the very end Maritain drew sharp dividing lines (unlike Bergson) between different types of intuition, and in "Il n'y a pas de savoir sans intuitivité" placed them under three main headings:

Je réserverai le nom d'intuition soit à l'intuition du sens externe, soit à l'intuition créatrice propre au poète(1), soit à l'intuition purement intellectuelle et cognitive ... (Op. cit., p. 30).

He places the pre-conceptual intuition of existence in the bracket of intellectual intuition, whereas this intuition is clearly so closely related to sense data that it is hardly distinct from them: "'voyant' sans composer des concepts entre eux, l'intellect est en prise directe

1. See Chapter Eight.

du réel" (p. 30).

The title of Maritain's 1970 article bears witness to the crucial importance of 'intuition' in his whole philosophy: if we are not in touch with something real outside the intelligence we can know nothing at all. And it is by a process of deepening our knowledge of what is that we arrive at knowledge of God:

L'aspect 'mystère' prédomine naturellement là où la connaissance est le plus ontologique; là où elle s'efforce de découvrir l'être en lui-même et les secrets de l'être, soit intuitivement, soit par analogie. Les secrets de l'être, de la connaissance, de l'amour; des réalités purement spirituelles; de la cause première (et par-dessus de la vie intime de Dieu) (Sept leçons, p. 11).

The existence of God is implied in the very experience of knowing, "avant d'entrer dans la sphère de la connaissance complètement formée et articulée, en particulier dans la sphère de la connaissance métaphysique" (Approches de Dieu, Alsatia, 1953, p. 11). In the act of apprehending existence God himself is unconsciously apprehended by 'contuition':

Tout dépend ici de l'intuition naturelle de l'être, - de l'intuition de cet acte d'exister qui est la forme de toute forme et la perfection de toute perfection, en qui toutes les structures intelligibles de la réalité ont leur définitive actuation ... (p. 11).

Cette intuition primordiale est à la fois l'intuition de mon existence et de l'existence des choses (p. 12).

The intuition of Being has three aspects: the solidity of existence is known; the subject's own existence is known through experience of 'le néant' and, thirdly, "je réalise que cette existence solide et inexorable perçue en n'importe quelle chose, implique ... une existence absolue et irréfragable, complètement libre du néant et de la mort" (p. 13).

The deepening awareness of Being (implied in the term 'intuition') took Maritain away from concepts of God and from arguments proving his

existence, towards an apprehension of God in immediate experience; it is this mystical knowledge of God which resulted largely from a deepening concentration on Bergson's 'intuition'. No longer does experience have to be validated by logic in the manner of the high Thomists (and present-day logical positivists), but experience itself validates logic. The terms are reversed.

For Maritain a certain knowledge of God is granted to the natural intelligence, but more truly to 'intellectus' than to 'ratio'. Maritain gradually came round to this position, so that when, in 1970, he dealt with the same subject as in 1910 - the distinction between 'intellectus' and 'ratio' - his attention was firmly fixed on the value of 'intellectus' rather than on the merits of 'ratio':

Au lieu de porter d'abord son regard vers les conclusions satisfaisantes pour la pensée à tirer des chaînes de raisonnement ... c'est vers le réel, vers ce qui est, que le savant porte exclusivement son regard - un regard neuf, oubliant pour le moment les explications admises (p. 33, italics in original).

It might conceivably be objected that direct knowledge of God is by no means a straightforward deepening of our knowledge of Being. In the Thomist account, direct knowledge of God is supernatural and is only granted by grace in revelation. Maritain does emphatically assent to the transcendence and mystery of God in various places, but from the time of Distinguer pour Unir (1932) he begins to place more emphasis on the immanence or presence of God in the world than on his separation from it. He asserts that metaphysical knowledge is gained by the intellectual intuition (pp. 280-281) and that there is nothing specifically supernatural about our knowledge of spiritual things, except that, at a certain point, grace intervenes to push our knowledge further (and not to give it in toto). Grace confirms and adds to what is dimly glimpsed or suspected by the light of

natural intelligence:

Il peut arriver qu'une vérité d'ordre naturel, telle que la réalité foncière de l'être, caché sous les phénomènes sensibles, où l'existence de la Cause première, prenne, sous l'influence d'une grâce actuelle, l'intensité d'une intuition, d'une évidence immédiate; l'intelligence pourra recevoir comme la révélation soudaine de ce qui fait l'objet propre du troisième degré d'abstraction (Distinguer pour Unir, pp. 551-552).

This intuition is marked out as "une intuition puissante, dont la violence parfois m'effrayait et qui la première m'a donné la connaissance d'un absolu métaphysique" (Ibid.). It follows from these quotations that the selfsame intuition, which 'knows' by sympathy or 'connaturalité' the things of the external world, can also penetrate to their first cause - under the guidance of grace.

This means that the worlds of grace and nature are in no way completely severed from one another:

Entre la foi et la raison, comme entre la grâce et la nature, il n'y a pas de séparation ... pas mal de nos ancêtres étaient aussi bêtes que nous; et, une fois deux termes assis sur les chaises d'une solide distinction, trouvaient fatigant de le lever de leur chaise pour faire ensemble un tour de valse ... la vie est comme ça: il y a distinction sans séparation (Le Paysan de la Garonne, 1966, p. 209).

For Maritain, as for Bergson, metaphysical knowledge is not the same as supernatural knowledge. All knowledge is metaphysical in this single sense - that mind attains the non-materiality of its object. 'La durée réelle' is known according to Bergson; 'intelligibility' or 'essence' is known according to Maritain. But, if non-material essence is known, then knowledge of God - non-material essence as existence - is not radically different from ordinary knowledge.

On the other hand, in the final analysis, metaphysical knowledge is separated from the vision of God face to face: "il n'y a d'expérience

proprement dite des choses divines que dans l'ordre surnaturel" (Distinguer pour Unir, p. 555). Man's own intuition is, nevertheless, good enough to approach this experience. Here below, there are "des modes de connaître qui sont comme des analogies de cette expérience. Les sortes d'intuition ou d'expériences métaphysiques dont il vient d'être question en sont un exemple" (p. 555). Even more explicitly, Maritain agrees that intellectual intuition is the first stage towards mystical knowledge:

On peut dire que toute connaissance naturelle par inclination ou sympathie, ou par connaturalité, fournit une analogie plus ou moins lointaine de l'expérience mystique (pp. 555-556).

Having considered all the concessions Maritain makes to the human intelligence in its search for reality, two things remain to be said. First, there is always an element of mystery and deficiency in our knowledge of God. This is not only natural but obvious (otherwise God would be as limited as our intelligence). Therefore, there is always the necessity and requirement of grace in knowing the things of God. There is no reason, even so, to consider that Bergson imagined otherwise. All the same, something of God's nature can be known by the human intellect in its natural state - and this is what Bergson assumes in Les Deux Sources. The inevitable result of any greater presumption is to distort the things of the spirit, as Maritain maintains: "la philosophie, tant qu'elle croit devoir ignorer le mystère de la grâce et celui de la croix, ne saurait atteindre dans leur vraie nature les choses de la vie mystique, même quand elle les honore de bonne foi" (p. 571). The inevitable result of such an attempt is a "réduction du spirituel au biologique" (p. 572).

Secondly, when Maritain speaks of knowing God through and only through the intelligence, he is not merely following his Thomist mentor, Humbert Clérissac, who told Maritain: "La vie chrétienne est à base d'intelligence ...

Avant tout Dieu est la Vérité; allez vers lui, aimez-le sous cet aspect" (Les Aventures de la Grâce, Raïssa Maritain, Desclée de Brouwer et Cie., 1949, quoted p. 235). Maritain found through Bergson that there was another way of knowing God - not so much as Truth but as Reality. This is equally knowledge by intelligence, but intelligence in its intuitive function. The rediscovery of 'intuition' by Bergson brought to the philosopher's vision the profundity of the self and of life itself (Being), so that Maritain's final opinion of Bergson as a philosopher is entirely laudatory:

Notre but n'est pas de critiquer une pensée courageuse qui, malgré son appareil philosophique, suit, à force de fidélité à la lumière intérieure, un pur trajet spirituel (Distinguer pour Unir, p. 571).

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE AESTHETIC THEORIES OF BERGSON AND MARITAIN

Henri Bergson wrote no works of aesthetic theory as such, but exerted a considerable influence on the literary world of his time, as has already been outlined in the Introduction. It is commonplace to say that Bergson stood for such things as 'individualism' or 'romantic idealism' but it would be a far more useful exercise to examine whether Bergson held precise aesthetic theories and what they consisted of. This is best done by referring to explicit passages on art and creativity in the context of the whole body of his work. In that way the different aspects of Bergson's aesthetic may be brought to light. In this chapter Bergson's thought is also brought into relief by a direct comparison with the rigorously exact philosophy of Jacques Maritain. This comparison will also have the benefit of shedding more light on Bergson's influence on Maritain's thought.

Maritain wrote a number of works on aesthetics, all of which use Thomas Aquinas's writings as a starting point but eventually reach well beyond its scope. They are: Art et Scolastique¹ (Lib. de l'Art Catholique, 1920); Réponse à Jean Cocteau (Stock, Dellamain et Boutelleau, 1926); Frontières de la Poésie (Rouart, 1927); Situation de la Poésie (with Raïssa Maritain, Desclée de Brouwer et Cie., 1938); "De la connaissance poétique" in Revue Thomiste (Vol. 44, 1938, pp. 87-98); Quatre Essais sur l'esprit dans sa condition charnelle (Desclée de Brouwer, 1939); Art and Poetry (Ed. Poetry, London, 1945); and Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry² (Harvill, London, 195

1. Also quoted from the English version; Sheed and Ward, London, 1930.

2. The latter two works were written in English by Maritain himself.

Works of a more general nature are Religion et Culture (Desclée de Brouwer, 1930) and Humanisme Intégral (Aubier, 1936).

There have only been two full-length studies on Maritain's aesthetic theory - namely, L'Esthétique de J. Maritain by Vagn L. Simonsen (Munksgaard, Copenhagen, 1953)¹ and T.D. Rover's The Poetics of Maritain: A Thomistic Critique (The Thomist Press, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., 1965)². Simonsen's main concern is to draw distinctions between orthodox Thomism and Maritain's deviations from it. Few works, surprisingly enough, have appeared on Bergson's aesthetic theory. R. Arbour gives an outline account of it in Henri Bergson et les lettres françaises (Lib. J. Corti, 1956). Then there are two works on Bergson's use of imagery: Les images dans l'oeuvre de M. Bergson (Wadig, Geneva, 1931) by Jeanne Hersch and La Dialectique des images chez Bergson by Lydie Adolphe (P.U.F., 1946). Mme. Hersch has also written a short article entitled "L'obstacle du langage" in Henri Bergson: Essais et Témoignages (Eds. A. Béguin & P. Thévenaz, Ed. de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1943, pp. 214-226). There are other chapters in this work on the same theme³. R. Bayer has written a work called L'Esthétique de Bergson (P.U.F., 1943), while F. Delattre has compared Ruskin and Bergson in his Ruskin et Bergson; de l'intuition esthétique à l'intuition métaphysique (Clarendon Press, Oxford,

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1. This book ignores Art and Poetry and only considers Creative Intuition ... for its last draft. Réponse à Jean Cocteau is dated 1928; 2 years late.
 2. Articles on Maritain's aesthetic theory include: "Art & M. Maritain" by 'Belgion' (Dublin Review, No. 187, 1930, pp. 201-215); "Jacques Maritain & his Aesthetic" by A. Little (Studies, No. 19, 1930, pp. 467-480); "Métaphysique et Poésie" by J. Madaule (Vie Intellectuelle, No. 40, 1936, pp. 322-329); "The Aesthetic of Maritain" by R. Rauch (Thought, No. 6, 1931, pp. 228-236); "The Springs of Poetry" by R. Speaight (The New Scholasticism, No. 46, 1972, pp. 51-69) and "Plato, Art and Mr. Maritain" by J. Tate (Id., No. 2, April 1938, pp. 107-142).
 3. Viz. E. Borne, "Note de poétique bergsonienne"; J. Mercanton, "La philosophie bergsonienne et le problème de l'art"; J. Paliard, "Notes sur la poésie bergsonienne"; M. Raymond, "Bergson et la poésie récente".

1947). E. Fiser's book, Le symbole littéraire, contains important passages on Bergson (Lib. J. Corti, 1941), as does A. Thibaudet's Le bergsonisme (2 vols., N.R.F., 1923)¹.

Both Bergson and Maritain search for a definition of beauty which can at one and the same time account for the many different manifestations of beauty and the great variety of opinions on the subject. Neither will subscribe to the simplistic idea that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder". For both men beauty must have some objective validity, and for both beauty can be separated in principle from the material through which it reveals itself. It can express itself through a work of art or through the physical aspect of 'nature' itself. It is, however, essentially a spiritual or immaterial attribute, as Bergson makes clear in this passage:

L'art du peintre ne consiste donc pas, pour Léonard de Vinci, à prendre par le menu chacun des traits du modèle pour les reporter sur la toile et en reproduire, portion par portion, la matérialité. Il ne consiste pas non plus à figurer je ne sais quel type impersonnel et abstrait, où le modèle qu'on voit et qu'on touche vient se dissoudre en une vague idéalité. L'art vrai vise à rendre l'individualité du modèle, et pour cela il va chercher derrière les lignes qu'on voit le mouvement que l'oeil ne voit pas, derrière le mouvement lui-même quelque chose de plus secret encore, l'intention originelle, l'aspiration fondamentale de la personne, pensée simple qui équivaut à la richesse indéfinie des formes et des couleurs ("La vie et l'oeuvre de Ravaisson", P.M., p. 1460).

This sequence of steps 'backwards' from the material appearance of a creation

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1. Articles on Bergson's aesthetic include: E. Bréhier, "Images plotiniennes images bergsoniennes" (Etudes berg., Vol. II, P.U.F., 1949); S. Dresden, "Les idées esthétiques de Bergson" (Ibid., Vol. IV, 1956); J. Bourdeau, (same title) (Journal des Débats, 24.2.1914); F. Janson, "Le sens de l'art d'après M. Bergson" (Le Flambeau, Brussels, January 1935); C. Lalo, "Promesses et carences de l'esthétique bergsonienne" (Revue de métaphysique et de morale, October 1941); F. Delattre, "Le bergsonisme et la littérature" (R.E.L.V., No. 39, 1922, pp. 252-257); Abbé Delfour on "Le style de M. Bergson" (L'Univers, Lille, 19.4.1911) and Tancredi de Visan on "La philosophie de Bergson et le lyrisme contemporain" (Vers et Prose, No. 21, 1910, pp. 125-140).

to its mental or spiritual source is paralleled by Bergson's conception of the world as God's creation in E.C., where 'behind' fixed matter one finds the invisible movement and life of 'l'élan vital' and 'behind' this one finds God as the source of life - giving 'l'élan vital' direction and intentionality. Matter is a fossilized residue of spiritual activity or 'movement' and this movement emanates from a principle of power. This is like the work of art being derived from images and ideas; these in turn emanating from a creative mind:

Si la vie est une création, nous devons nous la représenter par analogie avec les créations qu'il nous est donné d'observer ... Or, dans la création artistique, par exemple, il semble que les matériaux de l'oeuvre, paroles et images pour le poète, formes et couleurs pour le peintre, rythmes et accords pour le musicien, viennent se ranger spontanément sous l'idée qu'ils doivent exprimer, attirés en quelque sorte, par le charme d'une idéalité supérieure. N'est-ce pas un mouvement analogue, n'est-ce pas aussi un état de fascination que nous devons attribuer aux éléments matériels quand ils s'organisent en êtres vivants? (Ibid., pp. 1467-1468).

The radiance of beauty therefore corresponds to the finished work of art in somewhat the same way as clarity of mind corresponds to the lucid expression of ideas. If 'movement' is evident in a work of art, then it is the 'movement' of inspirations, disclosing in the finished work something of the original conception in the mind of the artist:

La beauté appartient à la forme, et toute forme a son origine dans un mouvement qui la trace: la forme n'est que du mouvement enregistré. Or, si nous nous demandons quels sont les mouvements qui décrivent des formes belles, nous trouvons que ce sont les mouvements gracieux ... (Ibid., p. 1472, italics in original).

This last statement obviously begs the question as to how 'gracieux' itself is to be defined, but Bergson does attempt an explanation:

... Dans tout ce qui est gracieux nous voyons, nous sentons, nous devinons une espèce d'abandon et comme une condescendance ... c'est la grâce qui se lit à

travers la beauté, et c'est la bonté qui transparaît sous la grâce (Ibid.).

Some might imagine that the work of art is to be judged by one's feelings about it; that appreciation of beauty depends on subjective emotions. But Bergson maintains the opposite of this; it is 'la grâce' already present in the work which elicits a response in the onlooker. 'La grâce' must therefore have an objective existence, and this existence is in the creator, whose 'bonté' gives rise to beauty in his works. The moral character of the artist or creator appears then to be supremely important, for his works reflect his 'soul'. By analogy the works of nature as creations of God must reflect 'la grace' through 'la bonté' of the creator:

Toute chose manifeste, dans le mouvement que sa forme enregistre, la générosité infinie d'un principe qui se donne ... (Ibid.).

This comment makes it quite clear that beauty has a 'moral' content; it is essentially a creation receiving the spiritual endowments of its creator. In Les Deux Sources Bergson argues that the beauty of the created world rests on the fact that it reflects the love the creator has for it:

Des êtres ont été appelés à l'existence qui étaient destinés à aimer et à être aimés, l'énergie créatrice devant se définir par l'amour (Les Deux Sources, p. 1194, my underlining).

This idea is expressed similarly in "La conscience et la vie":

Créateur par excellence est celui dont l'action ... est capable d'intensifier aussi l'action des autres hommes et d'allumer, généreuse, des foyers de générosité (L'Energie Spirituelle, p. 834).

Jacques Maritain shares many of these ideas on the nature and origin of beauty. For him, Creation itself or one particular creation seeks to express something of the divine radiance permeating the Universe. In other words, in having beauty a work simply shows - dimly perhaps - something

of God's nature. Poetry "est donc une image de la divine grâce ... parce que la nature est une allusion au royaume de Dieu, elle nous donne, sans le savoir, un pressentiment, un désir obscur de la vie surnaturelle" (Réponse à Jean Cocteau, p. 25).

Part of God's essence for Maritain is beauty and so once again the reality of beauty has an objective existence, not as a Platonic form, however, but in the mind or 'personality' of the godhead. The forms of beauty, apprehended through the material arrangement of a work of art, themselves relate to something transcending them, as well as to something transcending man's perception and understanding. In seeing something as beautiful "on touche à l'être lui-même, à une ressemblance de Dieu, à un absolu, à la noblesse et à la joie de notre vie; on entre dans le domaine de l'esprit" (Art et Scolastique, p. 25).

Maritain even has a counterpart for Bergson's idea of 'movement' as displaying the intention and inspiration of the creator. Maritain employs the image of musical rhythm and melody to illustrate his theory:

Where, if not in musical creation, could be found a better image of the creation of a world?... Like the world and like motion, song has its countenance only in memory; si non esset anima non esset tempus. And no more than the flow of time is music itself limited and closed (Art and Poetry, p. 57).

It is worth remembering that Bergson himself also used this image of music to portray the movement of "la durée": Bergson speaks of the movement of "la vie intérieure" as a musical score or melody:

Pouvez-vous, sans la dénaturer, raccourcir la durée d'une mélodie? La vie intérieure est cette mélodie même ... (P.M. Introduction, p. 1261; C.f. Essai, pp. 67-68).

He makes substantially the same point as Maritain about music's open-ended progression:

L'ensemble (des sensations) nous fait l'effet d'une phrase musicale qui serait toujours sur le point de finir et sans cesse se modifierait dans sa totalité par l'addition de quelque note nouvelle ... (Essai, p. 71).

Maritain does not lay the primary stress on the morally edifying quality in a work of beauty, but instead has a lot to say about the intelligent organization evident in creation (or in a particular work of creation). For Maritain the nature of God is first and foremost intellectual - he orders and arranges in a rational manner. In artistic terms, a creation should therefore display a high degree of intellectual activity:

The whole of the painter is the world of the eye before being and while being the world of the intellect (Creative Intuition, p. 129).

If a work of art is simply a random arrangement, it will nevertheless have meaning and significance attributed to it by an observer, and will reverberate even more in the mind as the onlooker struggles to find meaning for what he sees and to categorize it:

If I do not know exactly what a given sign signifies, well, it is then free to signify everything for me. In a sense, poetical joy and affective exaltation will then only become vaster in becoming more indeterminate (Creative Intuition, p. 267).

Man's power to apprehend and to know are at one and the same time movements towards seeing meaning and significance. Maritain believed that a work of art will have a significance whether or not it is intended by the onlooker. Now, if beauty is so much part and parcel of truth and reality (or 'being'), it can only be known as beauty through the intellect and through thought:

[L'Etre] répond à l'esprit connaissant, il lui parle, il surabonde en diction, il exprime, il manifeste une consistance pour la pensée, une intelligibilité telle ou telle qui est lui-même; une chose est vraie, - c'est-à-dire consonante à ce qu'elle dit ainsi d'elle-même à la pensée, à ce qu'elle annonce d'intelligibilité, - pour autant qu'elle est (Sept leçons sur l'être, p. 76).

However, although Maritain maintains that beauty is appreciated through meditation upon it and "delights the mind", nonetheless it is "intuited through the senses". This aesthetic intuition is not the same as the intellectual intuition to be found in Maritain's epistemology. Poetic intuition is "une connaissance bien différente de ce qu'on appelle couramment connaissance; une connaissance qui n'est pas exprimable en idées et en jugements, mais qui est plutôt expérience que connaissance, et expérience créatrice, car elle veut s'exprimer, et elle n'est exprimable que dans une oeuvre" (Situation de la Poésie, p. 102). Poetic intuition "est aneidétique, alogique, existentielle" (p. 144).

Maritain also introduces a new poetic or aesthetic faculty he calls "the preconscious intellect". This is not identical with a Freudian subconscious of instincts and images of repressed emotions: "c'est pourtant un inconscient plus vital et plus profond, l'inconscient de l'esprit en source caché à l'intelligence raisonneuse dans cette épaisseur de l'âme où tous les pouvoirs de celle-ci ont commune origine" (Situation de la poésie, p. 117). It has much in common with Bergson's 'moi intérieur' of L'Essai; the real self existing outside the control of the organizing and analyzing intellect. The preconscious intellect is nevertheless a latent conscious self, having the potential power to enrich consciousness. Poetic understanding, being 'preconscious', is a form of 'intuition'; it is not explicit or articulated. In Art and Poetry, Maritain explains that "the creative idea expresses itself finally in matter, as the speculative intuition of the philosopher does in the concept or mental word" (pp. 55-56).

All of this has remarkable affinity with what Bergson called "le schéma dynamique" in "L'Effort Intellectuel" (P.M., pp. 946-953) - a tension of the spirit which can hold in embryo the whole inspiration of a work of art or philosophy:

L'écrivain qui fait un roman, l'auteur dramatique qui crée des personnages et des situations, le musicien qui compose une symphonie et le poète qui compose une ode, tous ont d'abord dans l'esprit quelque chose de simple et d'abstrait, je veux dire d'incorporel ... Or travaille sur un schéma du tout, et le résultat est obtenu quand on arrive à une image distincte des éléments (Energie Spirituelle, p. 947).

To judge from the title of the chapter, the "schéma dynamique" is formed in the mind as a result of an intellectual effort:

On passera, du plan supérieur où tout était ramassé dans une seule représentation, à des plans de moins en moins élevés ... où la représentation simple est éparpillée en images, où les images se développent en phrases et en mots. Il est vrai que le rappel ne sera plus immédiat et facile. Il s'accompagnera d'effort (P.M., p. 936).

Maritain concurs with the idea that effort and attention are indispensable to creativity:

Inspiration requires of necessity the steady attentiveness of a purified mind ... Having only the power of a source, inspiration also requires of necessity ... the rational toil of the virtue of art and all the logic and shrewdness, self-restraint and self-possession of working intelligence (Creative Intuition, p. 246).

For Maritain the vision of beauty is prior to and, of course, inferior to, but very much a preliminary to the beatific vision of God. If the appreciation of beauty is primarily intellectual it nevertheless initially involves all the senses, the imagination and the wider consciousness - all these together are "the preconscious intellect":

Poetry obliges us to consider the intellect both in its secret wellsprings inside the human soul and as functioning in a non-rational (rather than anti-rational) way or non-logical way (Creative Intuition, p. 4).

Now, if aesthetic intuition is non-discursive and non-logical, how is it "intellectual" in any commonly accepted sense of the word? Is Maritain here outside the bounds of Thomist orthodoxy? Surely the word "mental" or

"psychical" or even "spiritual" should be used, for Maritain is speaking of an area of mind not concerned with concepts. In Maritain's analysis in Creative Intuition the conceptualizing intellect is only instrumental as a safeguard and as a regulator, ensuring that the completed work of art is faithful to the original inspiration. It is therefore not involved in the intuition but in the rendering, through artistic skills, of that intuition into a work of art.

Maritain even goes so far as to say that artistic vision (or intuition) longs to be free not only from discursive reason and the forms of language but from the logical sense itself, from intelligibility. But he then points out the dangers inherent in this freedom: "automatism brings not freedom, but dispersion" (Creative Intuition, p. 96). This danger is not explicitly mentioned by Bergson, but his emphasis in P.M. on concentration and attentiveness does not favour the surrealist aesthetic of free association and relaxation of the consciousness.

For Bergson, as for Maritain, intuition is a perception of unity which is only later scattered into images:

A mesure que nous cherchons davantage à nous installer dans la pensée du philosophe ... nous voyons sa doctrine se transfigurer. D'abord la complication diminue. Puis les parties entrent les unes dans les autres. Enfin tout se ramasse en un point unique, dont nous sentons qu'on pourrait se rapprocher de plus en plus quoiqu'il faille désespérer d'y atteindre. En ce point est quelque chose de si simple, d'infiniment simple, de si extraordinairement simple que le philosophe n'a jamais réussi à le dire. Et c'est pourquoi il a parlé toute sa vie (L'Intuition philosophique, P.M., pp. 1346-1347).

Therefore, both Bergson and Maritain posit a spiritual intuition which is abstract but which is not a clear-cut idea or concept. In Le Rire Bergson says of intuition that "elle apercevrait toutes choses dans leur pureté originelle" (p. 157). They are also both agreed that the creation of a

work of art is largely the rational, intellectual articulation of that intuition. They differ, however, over the exact content of what is intuited. For Maritain the intuition of beauty is a glimpse of something of God's essence; for Bergson the emphasis is usually on a clear vision of the real, which consists of movement and change in life. But both are wary of the misleading and deceptive nature of material reality, which seems to them to present an opaque and apparently immutable facade to the senses.

Maritain's "preconscious intellect", like Bergson's aesthetic intuition, is creative in the sense that it eschews old habits and observes naïvely and purely. Bergson asked: "A quoi vise l'art, sinon à nous montrer, dans la nature et dans l'esprit, hors de nous et en nous, des choses qui ne frappaient pas explicitement nos sens et notre conscience?" (P.M., p. 1370). The artist brings into focus nuances of emotion and perception which had only previously existed in the subconscious mind:

Au fur et à mesure qu'ils nous parlent, des nuances d'émotion et de pensée nous apparaissent qui pouvaient être représentées en nous depuis longtemps mais qui demeuraient invisibles (P.M., p. 1371).

Maritain's "preconscious intellect" can also convey new visionary qualities to art:

It is enough to think of the ordinary and everyday functioning of the intelligence ... and of the way in which ideas arise in our minds and every genuine intellectual grasping, or every new discovery, is brought about; it is enough to think of the way in which our free decisions, when they are really free, are made, especially those decisions which commit our entire life to realise that there exists a deep nonconscious world of activity, for the intellect and the will, from which the acts and fruits of human consciousness and the clear perceptions of the mind emerge, and that the Universe of concepts, logical connections, rational discursus and rational deliberation ... is preceded by the hidden workings of an immense and primeval preconscious life (Creative Intuition, pp. 93-94).

When an artist is able to highlight a new aspect of life through his art, one acknowledges that this vision is true to life and to one's own experience, although one has never realized it consciously before. Bergson makes very much this point about Corot's and Turner's painting:

Un Corot, un Turner ...ont aperçu dans la nature bien des aspects que nous ne remarquons pas ... Approfondissons ce que nous éprouvons devant un Turner ou un Corot: nous trouverons que, si nous acceptons et les admirons, c'est que nous avions déjà perçu quelque chose de ce qu'ils nous montrent. Mais nous avions perçu sans apercevoir. C'était, pour nous, une vision brillante et évanouissante, perdue dans la foule de ces visions également brillantes, également évanouissantes, qui se recouvrent dans notre expérience usuelle comme des 'dissolving views' et qui constituent, par leur interférence réciproque, la vision pâle et décolorée que nous avons habituellement des choses (P.M., p. 1371).

Bergson appears not to distinguish in this passage between the conscious and the subconscious mind. Rather, he implies a distinction between the habitual and the uncommon. Maritain's distinction is rather between awareness (conscious understanding) and the data of the subconscious mind fed by the senses but not brought to the notice of the observer. All the same, the views expressed are substantially similar; that an artist's creative perception extends ordinary human perception and heightens human sensibility:

L'art suffirait donc à nous montrer qu'une extension des facultés de percevoir est possible (P.M., p. 1371).

Maritain's "preconscious intellect" is, on his own confession, the mind, but "empty in itself of any concept or idea", yet "full of images, full of emotional movements and in which all the past experiences and treasures of memory acquired by the soul are present in a state of virtuality" (Creative Intuition, p. 246).

Bergson also considers that the artist draws on his whole past experience of life. The aesthetic emotion, while being single and simple, is nonetheless complex and reverberates throughout the consciousness and

memory:

La plupart des émotions sont grosses de mille sensations, sentiments ou idées qui les pénètrent: chacune d'elles est donc un état unique en son genre, indéfinissable, et il semble qu'il faudrait revivre la vie de celui qui l'éprouve pour l'embrasser dans sa complexe originalité (Essai, p. 15).

Artistic creation is a movement from emotional response and sensory awareness to the formation of images in the mind and then the linguistic expression of those images: or, to put it another way, the artist moves from the inchoate to the explicit, from impression to expression. The purpose of this is to bring to a wider audience one's private discoveries and to evoke sensitivity and awareness in the other:

L'objet de l'art est d'endormir les puissances actives ou plutôt résistantes de notre personnalité, et de nous amener à un état de docilité parfaite où nous réalisons l'idée qu'on nous suggère, où nous sympathisons avec le sentiment exprimé ... (Essai, p. 13).

----- En voyant repasser devant nos yeux ces images nous éprouverons à notre tour le sentiment qui en était pour ainsi dire l'équivalent émotionnel ... (p. 14).

Maritain takes Bergson's ideas a step further. For him, the artist does not simply have sensations or emotions, but is in receipt of an inspiration which possesses him and drives him to create. This inspiration is derived ultimately from God, but it can be misunderstood or misused:

Dans l'ordre naturel ... il y a une inspiration spéciale, qui, elle aussi, est au-dessus de la délibération de la raison, et qui procède, comme le notait Aristote, de Dieu présent en nous. Telle est l'inspiration du poète. C'est pourquoi il est bien un homme divin. Comme le saint? Non. Comme le héros (Réponse à Jean Cocteau, p. 24).

Maritain also insists in Art & Scholasticism that the aim of art is to "rejoice the spirit" (p. 34) as well as "to delight the mind" (p. 49). For Maritain it is not only emotional movements which are converted into art; it is also truth and grace. This discovery of truth and grace has

the effect of arousing emotion and not the other way round¹. Knowledge of the truth is for Maritain in some way knowledge of God and this knowledge, when described, brings joy in its wake, first in the artist and then in his audience:

Art teaches men the pleasure of the spirit... No man can live without pleasure. Therefore a man deprived of the pleasures of the spirit goes over to the pleasures of the flesh (Art & Scholasticism, p. 80).

Art at its best is inevitably ennobling and uplifting and morally elevating.

Maritain and Bergson both share the conviction that art is dependent upon and seeks to represent the truth. When Bergson speaks of an artist conveying his feelings or experiences he presupposes art to be the communication of objective truth. Intuition attains an absolute. Art is not pure imagination, nor is it pursued for its own sake. Rather, it feeds on close observation and interpretation of the real world. Maritain talks of this in terms of "being" and "ontology", whereas Bergson uses expressions like "la durée" and "le moi intérieur". However, Maritain's statement - "Art does not proceed from itself but from being" (Art & Scholasticism, p. 96) - very much parallels Bergson's statement that "cette intuition atteint un absolu" (P.M., p. 1424). So, although Maritain's conclusions go beyond Bergson's, he nevertheless remains faithful to the direction of Bergson's thought:

Art, in describing Truth and portraying its Spirit, must show that spiritual values are the most real things (being) in the world (Art & Scholasticism, p. 118).

Bergson's use of the word spirit is not normally like Maritain's², but there

1. See Art & Scholasticism, pp. 63-65.

2. e.g. Intuition is described as "la vision directe de l'esprit par l'esprit" (P.M., p. 1273).

are occasions when intuition relates to a supernatural realm - e.g.

"(L'intuition) voudrait saisir dans les choses, meme matérielles, leur participation à la spiritualité, nous dirions à la divinité"

(P.M., p. 1274).

According to Maritain, man as a creator not only puts himself in touch with God through his participation in the world of inspiration and grace - he also makes himself like God when he creates beautiful works. He is a co-operator in God's activity as creator: "artistic creation does not copy God's creation, but continues it" (Art & Scholasticism, p. 63). Man's creativity is like God's; it aims at intelligent organization and brings something quite new into being: "to produce something intellectually, to manufacture an object rationally constructed, is a very considerable achievement in the world: in itself, for man, a way of imitating God" (p. 125). It demonstrates the "ontological resemblance of our soul to God" (Id.). For Maritain, only God can create matter ex nihilo, but man's creative power is like God's in that he can create new patterns and perceive new relationships before they actually exist.

Bergson attempts to shed further light on the genesis of the creative process in Les Deux Sources and reaches strikingly similar conclusions to Maritain. He argues that, whereas men often adapt and build on previous thoughts and ideas, occasionally they create in the true sense of the word. He lucidly explains the way in which man participates in God's creativity: "comment l'amour où les mystiques voient l'essence meme de la divinité peut être, en même temps qu'une personne, une puissance de création" (Les Deux Sources, p. 1190). He expounds this in some detail:

(L'artiste) se tient d'ordinaire, quand il écrit, dans la région des concepts et des mots. La société lui fournit ... des idées qu'il combine d'une manière nouvelle ... Cette méthode donnera un résultat plus ou moins satisfaisant, mais elle aboutira toujours

à un résultat, et dans un temps restreint. L'oeuvre produite pourra d'ailleurs être originale et forte ... Mais ce ne sera qu'un accroissement du revenu de l'année; l'intelligence sociale continuera à vivre sur le même fonds, sur les mêmes valeurs. Maintenant il y a une autre méthode de composition ... Elle consiste à remonter, du plan intellectuel et social, jusqu'en un point de l'âme d'où part une exigence de création. Cette exigence ... est toujours là, émotion unique, ébranlement ou élan reçu du fond même des choses. Pour lui obéir tout à fait, il faudrait forger des mots, créer des idées ... L'écrivain tentera de réaliser l'irréalisable. Il ira chercher l'émotion simple, forme qui voudrait créer sa matière ... (pp. 1190-1191).

The opposition to creation comes from the material world - not only from matter as such but from ideas already articulated, from works of art already completed and from social and personal habits which form the 'matter' of daily life. All these things are obstacles to novelty and originality, to true creation. Bergson says a good deal about the stultifying, restricting nature of the material in E.C., but what is more surprising is that Maritain himself shares something of this view:

Art ... ought to be on the look-out for what is easy. It must have opposition and constraint, the constraint of rules and the opposition of matter (Art & Scholasticism, p. 130).

And, just as Bergson regards intuition as a creative perception - a purification of the vision - Maritain also sees creativity in terms of new insight into Being and the nature of life:

En assimilant tout ce qu'il y a de vrai dans ces systèmes partiels, (le progrès de la philosophie) dilatera sa propre substance et fera jaillir d'elle des éclairs de plus en plus profonds, révélant les énergies cachées dans les vérités qu'il contient. La nouveauté qu'il manifeste ainsi ... est avant tout une nouveauté dans la manière d'aborder les mêmes rivages de l'être et de distribuer les mêmes richesses du mystère des choses. Ce sont de nouvelles perspectives constamment ouvertes sur le même univers intelligible, le même paysage immatériel (Sept leçons, p. 19).

The image or symbol is also equally important in both Bergson's and

Maritain's aesthetic theory. For Bergson the material world itself is a collection of 'images' - in other words, it appears as 'images' to the human consciousness:

J'appelle matière l'ensemble des images, et perception de la matière ces mêmes images rapportées à l'action possible d'une certaine image déterminée, mon corps (M.M., p. 173).

The brain can, in a sense, select which 'images' of the material world it wishes to take in and then can use that information as it likes - re-arranging and 're-presenting' at will¹. Thus the image retains something of its 'immutable' objective existence as matter, and nevertheless has something of the idea or the concept about it:

Par image, nous entendons une certaine existence qui est plus que ce que l'idéaliste appelle une représentation, mais moins que ce que le réaliste appelle une chose - une existence située à mi-chemin entre 'la chose' et 'la représentation' (M.M., p. 161).

Bergson's understanding of the word 'image' thus implies far more than a poetic symbol and describes our intuition of reality as a whole. The 'image' is reality-as-mental or reality in the consciousness. This perhaps explains why Bergson employs so many metaphors of life as a whole and metaphors of different aspects of life; 'la durée réelle' is like a musical score (Essai, pp. 70-71); the brain is like a telegraph operator (Matière et Mémoire, p. 247); the 'élan vital' passes through matter like an invisible hand passing through iron filings (E.C., pp. 575-576); 'l'élan' has explosive energy like a shell exploding into fragments (E.C., p. 578); the creation of the material world is likened to a boiling kettle (E.C., p. 705) and to an exploding shell again (E.C., p. 706). All of these are symbols rather than images in the strict sense. And such verbs as

1. See Matière et Mémoire, pp. 180-181.

'resserrer', 'viser', 'creuser', 'éteindre' are repeatedly used metaphorically, as symbols, and not as 'images' in the sense just discussed.

Maritain is more meticulous about language. He calls the symbol 'le signe' and subdivides it into a number of types. He distinguishes 'le signe naturel' from 'le signe conventionnel'. The latter points to but differs radically from what it indicates, but the former takes its reality more directly from what it refers to - "relativement à autre chose rendue par là connaissable aussi - c'est une propriété réelle, ce n'est pas une relation purement idéale, n'existant comme telle que dans la pensée" (Quatre Essais, p. 62). He gives the example of the concept of a horse relating to a real horse.

Maritain is careful not to equate the sign with the image (which Bergson often does by use of metaphor):

Toute image n'est pas signe; et tout signe n'est pas image. Car l'image (qui 'procède d'un autre comme de son principe, et à la ressemblance de cet autre') peut être de même nature et de même degré ontologique que celui-ci (le fils est l'image du père, il n'en est pas le signe). Et bien des signes ne sont pas des images (la fumée n'est pas l'image du feu, ni le cri de la douleur) (Quatre Essais, pp. 64-65).

Here again one encounters the difficulty of a change of vocabulary from Bergson to Maritain. For Bergson the best images are "représentations souples, mobiles, presque fluides, toujours prêtes à se mouler sur les formes fuyantes de l'intuition" (P.M., p. 1402). The image is an evocation in material symbols of spiritual insight. Maritain's theory is not at all straightforward. He is given to logical sub-divisions and categories. For example, when speaking of the 'signe-image' he says that it gives 'bedeutung' and 'bild' simultaneously - 'bedeutung' being intellectual content and 'bild' a picture image in the imagination. In keeping with the general bias of his philosophy he considers 'bedeutung' to be uppermost -

in fact, the whole of creation is at the outset intellectually grasped. For instance, the statue or image of a god suggests to the intellect "toutes les forces cosmiques et psychiques, les attraites, les passions qui prenaient en lui figure ... tout cela était présent dans la statue, non par mode physique, mais in alio esse, et selon la présence de cognoscibilité ..." (Quatre Essais, p. 691). In the same way, a picture of a unicorn can be interpreted not as the representation (image) of an animal, but as containing elements and attributes existing in various animals in the real world. Bergson's statue image (Essai, p. 84 ff.) of the fixity of the external self is more of a literal image showing how man makes a statue of himself in resisting the 'élan vital'. Thus the machine-like man is portrayed throughout Le Rire to great effect in explaining humour.

The more complex approach of Maritain does, however, draw attention to the sometimes difficult relations between pictorial images and abstract thoughts. He attempts to explain more oblique and subtle uses of imagery than Bergson does, but he often tends towards a rather rigid account of the connection between sign and meaning, starting from the assumption that "la naissance de l'idée ... semble liée à la découverte de la valeur de signification d'un signe" (Quatre Essais, p. 69). It is surely true that thinking in image can often precede the ascribing of meaning to the images.

Maritain and Bergson coincide in one other particular in this area - they both attribute active power to the image. It can be a vehicle which enlightens the mind, stimulating a change in the consciousness and becoming the giver of new knowledge. The 'signe' par excellence for Maritain is the Eucharist and this becomes not just an image but "une cause instrumentale dont la Cause même de l'être use pour produire la grâce dans l'âme comme l'artiste use du violon ou de la flûte pour produire de la beauté" (Quatre Essais, p. 76). The dynamism or potency of a sign does not come from itself, but from the

reality with which it is in touch. The importance of the 'signe' or image lies in its power to evoke something beyond itself. Bergson is in agreement with Maritain over this, and in writing to F. Delattre drew attention to the capacity of the image to evoke the real:

Dans un livre comme Evolution Créatrice ou Les Deux Sources, l'image intervient le plus souvent parce qu'elle est indispensable, aucun des concepts existants ne pouvant exprimer la pensée de l'auteur, et l'auteur étant obligé alors de la suggérer. Cette suggestion ne pourra se faire que par une image, mais par une image que le philosophe n'a pas choisie, qui se présente d'elle-même comme seul moyen de communication, et qui s'impose avec une absolue nécessité (Mélanges, p. 1526; my underlining except italics in original for 'exprimer' and 'suggérer').

There is some agreement then between Maritain and Bergson, but there is also the possibility of disagreement over the ontological basis of the image.

For Bergson, the image can have existential value - it is itself what it points to - light can be described as 'waves', for instance. But, for Maritain, the image can only ever have a functional value - it is always separate from what it points to. Having said this, however, it is difficult to know just how much Bergson intended to be taken literally in his assessment of material reality as "un ensemble d'images" (M.M., p. 161) and, further, it is quite obvious that his normal use of images does not presuppose an equivalence between image and reality in existential terms. It would be far-fetched to imagine that Bergson considered creation literally to be an exploding shell!

It is important to realize, though, that Maritain always expected the intelligence to keep things in perspective - to prevent a confusion between 'le signe' and what it represents. It is primitive man who subordinates intelligence to imagination: "L'intelligence est toute liée et subordonnée à l'imagination et à son univers sauvage" (Quatre Essais,

p. 83). When intelligence dominates then "les sensations, les images, les idées sont solaires, engagées dans le psychisme lumineux et régulier de l'intelligence et de ses lois de gravitation" (p. 84). When imagination ruled, the ideas "étaient nocturnes, engagées dans le psychisme fluide et crépusculaire de l'imagination, et d'une expérience étonnamment puissante mais toute vécue et - pour autant qu'objet de réflexion - rêvée" (p. 84).

Surprisingly enough, however, on close examination it appears that Bergson here again holds views similar to Maritain's, for he too is aware of the dangers when imagination rules the mind and places it out of touch with the truth. Bergson refers to the fact that primitive peoples invest an image with magical powers instead of ascribing those powers to something else. Instead of finding rational explanations for everyday occurrences they see the appearance - the image itself - as the reality:

Si l'intelligence menace ... de rompre sur certains points la cohésion sociale ... il faut que, sur ces points, il ait à l'intelligence un contrepoids. Si le contrepoids ne peut pas être l'instinct lui-même ... il faut qu'une virtualité d'instinct ... produise le même effet: il ne peut agir directement, mais puisque l'intelligence travaille sur des représentations, il en suscitera d'imaginaires qui tiendront tête à la représentation du réel et qui réussiront ... à contre-carrer le travail intellectuel. Ainsi s'expliquerait la fonction fabulatrice ... (Les Deux Sources, p. 1076).

So the primitive might regard the image as being the real. "Il vit dans le pays de la vraisemblance," says Maritain (Quatre Essais, p. 88). Bergson does not state categorically that magic uses signs as presences, but this can be deduced. Maritain is more explicit. In primitive man's mind there is "une interchangeabilité physique, une fusion physique et une équivalence physique du signe et du signifié (invocation des noms mythiques; objets magiques; envoûtements; idolatrie). Le primitif est ivre de l'excellence du signe" (Quatre Essais, p. 88). In the final analysis it appears that,

for Bergson as well as for Maritain, "le signe, malgré tout, reste signe" (p. 90) and that a grave mistake is made when man does not look beyond the image or sign for reality.

Early in the formation of language, words themselves were signs with clearly defined and simple meanings - gestures primarily indicating physical objects or feelings like thirst or fear. At a later stage a sound had no visible or immediate connection with what it described. Therefore, Maritain argues, the character of language is "de procurer un substitut de l'expérience apte à être transmis sans fin dans le temps et l'espace, ce qui est le propre de notre symbolisme et le fondement de la tradition linguistique" (Quatre Essais, p. 117).

As language becomes more flexible it has paradoxically become more fixed. In social intercourse language has come to have standardized meanings and inevitably to lack individual nuance. It is oriented towards the communication of ideas and experiences common to all men. A private language can be more flexible but tends to be hermetic - meaningful only to 'a happy few' or communicating a 'moi collectif' (Quatre Essais, p. 123).

Both Bergson and Maritain view the highest and subtlest form of communication as non-linguistic - a direct transference of emotions, thoughts and experiences from consciousness to consciousness. The mediation of language is an unfortunate obstacle, a blunt instrument to be used as precisely, delicately and wisely as possible. Hence, Maritain thinks that "c'est seulement dans la langue des Anges que le langage pourrait atteindre la complète liberté et l'excellence même de sa propre nature ... Mais les Anges ne se servent pas de mots ..." (Quatre Essais, p. 124). The restrictions of language have led to generality, inaccuracy and banality by oscillating between the over-definite and the over-vague. This has detracted from the vividness and clarity of spontaneous thought and feeling

and has reduced communication to a lowest common denominator of experience and meaning.

In the body of Bergson's work the imprecision and bluntness of words is a recurring theme:

L'art de l'écrivain consiste surtout à nous faire oublier qu'il emploie des mots. L'harmonie qu'il cherche est une correspondance entre les allées et les venues de l'esprit et celle de son discours ... le rythme de la parole n'a donc autre objet que de reproduire le rythme de la pensée (Energie Spirituelle, p. 849).

So, for Bergson, language is composed of mutually exclusive terms, united by their external relations. Language breaks up and obscures an intuition, which, as has been seen, takes in the totality of a perception in an indivisible whole and in a non-logical way. He calls language "un découpage de la réalité" (P.M., p. 1277) and, like intelligence, with which it has affinities and by which it is organized, it follows:

les lignes qu'il faut suivre pour agir commodément sur elle. Le plus souvent, elles distribuent les objets et les faits d'après l'avantage que nous en pouvons tirer, jetant pêle-mêle dans le même compartiment intellectuel tout ce qui intéresse le même besoin (P.M., p. 1277).

Maritain's attitude is not quite the same as Bergson's. Bergson regards language as an obstacle because it fails to capture the individuality and novelty of perception (intuition), but Maritain believes that language and perception both fail to capture the beauty of Being which transcends them both. Not merely speech and language, but also observation and experience, fail to do justice to the intensity and luminosity of Being which emanates from and is part of God's nature. The very word 'God' carries far more meaning and means far more in terms of experience for a mystic than it does for an atheist or agnostic. The man who sees God face to face is acutely aware of the inadequacy of human

expressions, but, more than this, he is aware of body and mind's incapacity to experience the infinitely intense.

Because language can be a blockage to the expression and the understanding of truth, and because even experience is incapable of taking it in, the best way to convey reality is through pointers or symbols which direct one away from immanent experience and from literal translation. Art shows forth its joy, harmony and beauty best, according to Maritain, in symbols which are not hieroglyphs, each standing for an object, but "spontaneous symbolism intuitively apprehended" (Creative Intuition, p. 57). He goes on to say that reproduction "relates, along with manual dexterity, to the artistic activity, but no more constitutes it" (Ibid., p. 58).

Bergson's ideas also favour the implied, the suggested, the incantatory, the symbolic and the metaphoric; for at its best language can attempt to follow the mobility, the interplay and the interpenetration of all reality and can describe the true self with its stream of intermingled memories, emotions and thoughts. Many of Bergson's images are of movement - as illustrated by verbs such as 'briser le cercle', 'élargir', 'creuser', 'aiguiser', 'palper' and 'ausculter'. His other main method of expressing change and motion is through the use of rhythm, which serves to recapture the progress of 'la durée'.

Although Maritain acknowledges with Bergson the difficulty and necessity of expressing the immaterial in fixed material ways, he does not accept the concomitant truth of Bergsonism that the spiritual is in a state of perpetual flux. Thus, in Maritain there is more concentration on classical style - the use of the 'mot juste' and the observance of discipline and rule in order to achieve the highest degree of clarity possible. Maritain does indeed liken artistic creation to musical rhythm, but for a different reason from Bergson. Music is not to serve to imitate 'la durée' of real life, but

"music, like tragedy, purifies the passions, by developing them within the limits and in the order of beauty, harmonising them with the intelligence, in a harmony fallen nature experiences nowhere else" (Art & Scholasticism, p. 65). The function of art for Maritain, then, is to harmonize the mind and personality with Being, to make conditions favourable for rational and clear thought, pure and unmingled feelings and an elevated spirit. Naturally Maritain is caught up in a world of ethical problems because of his desire to dogmatize about the nature of Being and truth. He is involved in a debate over spiritual values if the ultimate goal of art is the knowledge and vision of God. But in this realm he moves beyond Bergson's world of movement and change for, although Bergson's aesthetic does occasionally have moral and spiritual overtones, it does not place great emphasis on these. They are not central to his doctrines. On the other hand, Maritain considers such overtones to be paramount and all-important:

Truth and morality are One in the last analysis and Art, in describing Truth and portraying its spirit, must show that spiritual values are the most real things (being) in the world: 'And all that is most real escapes the notice of the darkened soul' (Art & Scholasticism, p. 118).

Art 'must be converted to find God again' (Id.).

Bergson's main concern is not with life, as pointing to the forms of truth and goodness, but with life as 'durée' and for this reason he is eager to communicate the movement of 'la durée' through language. His ideal style would therefore be, as Jeanne Hersch puts it: "un entraînement musical" where "l'esprit goûte au mouvement suggéré, et en le mimant le transforme en réalité d'expérience" ("L'obstacle du langage" in Henri Bergson: Essais et Témoignages, p. 217).

For Maritain, the task of following the movement of real time or of the 'stream of consciousness' is secondary and belongs to a philosophy of time

rather than a philosophy of Being. In his own philosophy words are not merely static obstacles, but can be conductors of a truth lying beyond both the form and meaning of words as well as beyond the appearances of experience and intuition.

The central difference between Bergson's and Maritain's aesthetic theories is not so much one of doctrine as such, but one of emphasis. While both accept that experience is an open door to hidden depths in the consciousness and the external world - in short, to reality - they stress different aspects of that experience. Bergson lays stress on the immanent life of the consciousness, while Maritain turns his sight to a world beyond the senses where earthly truths and values are vindicated, purified and eternalized¹.

1. The Platonic influence on Maritain's thought is explored to some extent by J. Tate in "Plato, Art and Mr. Maritain" (New Scholasticism, No. 2, 1938, pp. 107-142), where he baldly states that "Plato manages to say what Maritain considers St. Thomas to have meant" (p. 110). "Plato's remarks ... might have served Maritain as a useful support and illustration" (p. 110). Needless to say, this flies in the face of much interpretation of Maritain as a strict Aristotelean.

CHAPTER NINE

PEGUY AND BERGSON - LITERARY STYLE

Péguy's first acquaintance with Bergson was through the lectures at the Collège de France during the academic year 1897-1898, when Bergson replaced M. Charles Lévêque for the first term and lectured on "La psychologie de Plotin" and "La quatrième Ennéade"¹. After attending one of these lectures Péguy, in his usual direct and dramatic way, stopped Bergson in his tracks and exclaimed:

Monsieur, je sais que vous avez suspendu vos travaux personnels pour vous occuper uniquement de nous. Vous avez tort. Vous avez une oeuvre à écrire et vous ne devez la subordonner à rien (Cahiers de la Quinzaine, 3.7.1900, pp. 47-48).

After this, Péguy and Bergson must have become personal friends, for in 1899 Boivin recorded in a letter: "dans l'après-midi, visite de Bergson lui-même amené par Péguy" (Feuillets de l'Amitié Charles Péguy, Orléans, 60, 21).

Péguy's enthusiasm for Bergson's philosophy was instantaneous. He had read L'Essai and Matière et Mémoire before the end of 1897, because he offered his bride-to-be a copy of Matière et Mémoire as a wedding present², which, coupled with the fact that he possessed a first edition of the work, indicates that he knew the book before October 1897.

Bergson is not quoted directly, however, until the article entitled "Les récentes oeuvres de Zola" in the Mouvement Socialiste of 1st-15th

1. Notes on these lectures are to be found in Bergson et Plotin by R.-M. Mossé-Bastide (P.U.F., 1959).

2. See A. Robinet (Péguy entre Jaurès, Bergson et l'Eglise, Seghers, 1968, p. 152).

November 1899¹. Péguy admiringly comments on Bergson's ideas about genius. André Robinet (Péguy entre Jaurès, Bergson et l'Eglise, Seghers, 1968, p. 150) considers these ideas, together with those on quantity and quality in general in L'Essai, to have been especially influential on Péguy².

In his Cahier of 1st October 1901 Péguy speaks of his exceptional interest in Bergson's philosophy:

J'ai lu attentivement les rares livres de ce véritable philosophe et je suis assidûment son cours au Collège de France ... le vendredi à 4 heures et les trois quarts; et je suis assuré que c'est l'heure le mieux employée de ma semaine (Oeuvres I, p. 384).

In April of the following year Péguy again praises Bergson's courses and is struck by the number of people attending (Oeuvres I, p. 468).

On 14th March 1902 Péguy visited Bergson with Boivin (see Feuillet 64, 19). He wrote his first letter to Bergson on the 25th July 1902 asking for a copy of the Palmarès du Lycée Voltaire where Bergson gave his discourse "De l'Intelligence" on 31st July³.

Péguy followed Bergson's lectures for a number of years; quite regularly up till 1908 at least. They dealt with the idea of time and its history (1901-1903), Aristotle's Physics II (1902-1903), and his Metaphysics IX (1903-1904), Plotinus's Enneades VI (1901-1902), Spencer's First Principles (1904-1905), the development of theories of memory (1903-1904) and the problem of free will (1904-1905). Bergson took a sabbatical year from 1905 to 1906 in order to write L'Evolution Créatrice. This book met with a cool reception

1. See Oeuvres en Prose I (1898-1908), Bib. de la Pléiade, p. 555.

2. Robinet actually lists all the references Péguy made to Bergson's early works, noting the significant fact that he ignored or was ignorant of Le Rire (1900) (see pp. 151-152),

3. Text in Mélanges, pp. 553-560.

from Péguy, as is outlined later, although he made use of many of its ideas.

By 1905 Bergson's star is completely dominant over Jaurès's in Péguy's life, for he wrote contemptuously of Jaurès: "il m'eût fait tout un discours de la philosophie de Bergson, dont il ne savait pas, et dont il n'eût pas compris le premier mot" (Oeuvres I, pp. 857-858). Péguy and Jaurès met for the last time on 19th November 1905.

Shortly before this episode, Péguy had published part of Bergson's Introduction à la Métaphysique in his Cahier IV-12 (17.2.03) without any concern over the copyright and without asking permission. Bergson wrote (22.2.03) complaining mildly of this fact¹. Bergson feared having his philosophy used in a partisan way or as propaganda, but there was no lasting ill-feeling. Nevertheless, some time later, Bergson refused to allow Péguy to publish "l'Ame et le Corps" in the Cahiers.

Bergson read Péguy's Cahiers and subscribed to them regularly, and, in a period of financial difficulty for Péguy, Bergson even increased his subscription to 'un abonnement de souscription' (9.5.06)².

By 1908 Péguy's attendance at Bergson's courses had become sporadic (see Boivin's letter in Feuillets 64, 28), and this can be explained partly by Péguy's distaste for certain elements in L'Evolution Créatrice and partly by his leaning towards Catholicism. He wrote to Maritain on 24th May 1907:

A certains égards et dans certaines parties, notamment sur le livre de Bergson, je suis dans votre sens non seulement beaucoup plus que vous ne le croyez, mais

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1. See Etudes Bergsoniennes VIII (P.U.F., 1968, p. 14): article, "Le dossier Bergson-Péguy" by A. Martin.
 2. Letter reproduced in Mélanges, pp. 680-681.

beaucoup plus que vous n'y êtes vous-même (Feuillets, 176, 35).

Péguy sent Bergson a copy of his first Jeanne d'Arc on 3rd June 1910 (see Etudes bergsoniennes VIII, p. 25) and later Bergson tried to help Péguy with his Le mystère de la charité de Jeanne d'Arc by recommending it to Xavier Léon for inclusion in La Revue de métaphysique et de morale. It was turned down as unphilosophical. Bergson also tried to help Péguy with subscriptions to the Cahiers and asked A. Kahn and Baron Rothschild for support. Bergson increased his own subscription by 100 francs in June-July 1910. He wrote congratulating Péguy on his article, "La mystique et la politique", in Cahier XI-12 of 12th July 1910¹.

So Bergson and Péguy were on excellent terms again by early 1911. Péguy wrote a letter of gratitude to Bergson in March and then sent a copy of his own Oeuvres choisies. Bergson asked him to enter it for the Grand Prix de Littérature at the Académie Française. Unfortunately, Bergson forgot to support the entry with a speech² and Romain Rolland took first prize (8.6.1912). From then on relations deteriorated again for some time. Bergson and Péguy were both overworked and Péguy faced failure and penury as well. In a depressed frame of mind he wrote to Bergson (27.2.14) accusing him of having no time to read his work any more. Bergson denied this, but after Bergson's entry into the Académie Française (12.2.14) Péguy wrote to Joseph Lotte (Feuillets 155, 46; 18.2.14): "mon petit, Bergson est entré à l'Académie parce qu'il a fait la paix avec la Sorbonne et j'ai été le prix de cette paix".

Then, at about this time, Bergson himself suddenly lost popularity and

1. See Etudes bergsoniennes VIII, p. 31.

2. Note of apology reprinted in Etudes bergsoniennes VIII, p. 46.

found himself beset by opposition on all fronts. He faced attack from left-wing critics for his supposed Catholic leanings, attack from Catholics for his heretical tendencies and attack from the extreme right Action française. La Grande Revue pronounced on Bergson's popularity and decided that it had caused a decline in cultural life and literary style! In 1914 Bergson was placed on the Papal Index. Because of this, Péguy saw himself as Bergson's sole champion and he and Bergson were once again in a battle together against the arbiters of taste and intellectual life in France. Péguy rallied to Bergson's support, hoping not to repeat Lanson's infidelity to his master, Brunetière: "tout disparaît devant ces recroisements d'ingratitude et devant cette renégation d'un maître et d'un père devenu malheureux" ("L'Argent Suite", II, p. 1127). In heroic style, Péguy defended Bergson through his Note sur M. Bergson et la philosophie bergsonienne (II, p. 1313 ff.) and his Note conjointe sur M. Descartes et la philosophie cartésienne (II, p. 1357 ff.).

He located the fundamental problem as a confusion over the meaning of the word 'intellect':

On a feint de croire que la querelle faite à l'intellectualisme était une querelle faite à la raison, à la sagesse, à la logique. Et à l'intelligence (II, p. 1313, italics in original).

This had created a false dispute over certain argument which Bergson had not in fact advocated. Péguy considers that Bergson is not concerned to overthrow all previous philosophies but has instead added a significant insight to them: that intellect in the sense of 'detached, objective analysis' is not the only possible guide to knowledge; there is also "une philosophie de l'intérieur" (p. 1313), a movement of the subject towards the object, a deepening sense of reality which goes beyond the application of thought alone. Nevertheless, this is no mere philosophy of 'feeling' - "Il ne faut donc pas dire que le bergsonisme soit une philosophie pathétique ni

une philosophie du pathétique" (p. 1314) - it is a philosophy which takes account of feelings as well as ideas and which has a sense of closeness to living realities. It is the depth of apprehension and interpretation which matters more than the type or the method. Therefore, "le bergsonisme n'a jamais été ni un irrationalisme ni un antirationalisme. Il a été un nouveau rationalisme" (p. 1341).

Of course Péguy is attempting in this article not to write a critical point-by-point appraisal of Bergson's ideas; he is attempting to grasp the motivation and essence of Bergson's approach. His distinction between 'le tout fait' and the 'se faisant' (p. 1321 ff.) is not only an interpretation of the time element in Bergsonism; it also says something profound about any philosophy - namely, that it cannot describe reality definitively or exhaustively, neither should it impose a schema of ideas upon reality prior to examination and investigation: "Il y a des idées qui sont toutes faites ... avant qu'on les fasse" (p. 1323).

He takes up this theme again in Note conjointe sur M. Descartes ... : "une idée fausse toute faite est infiniment plus fausse comme toute faite que comme fausse" (p. 1385). Most of the rest of his essay is an account of the Bergsonian lifestyle; living without assumptions, without false securities, without mechanical behaviour, in a lively awareness of one's own contingency. He calls this variously 'grace' or 'liberté' or 'précarité'. It is a quality of life akin to the Christian living by faith, trusting God at each moment and opening the soul to new experiences; the opposite is spiritual death:

l'un est la liberté de l'homme, dans l'ordre de la vie; l'autre est la force de l'habitude, dans l'ordre de l'amortissement et de la mort (p. 1413).

Having said this much of Péguy's opinion of Bergson's philosophy in general terms, it is not my intention here to give an account of the affinities

between Péguy's and Bergson's philosophy of life. This has already been attempted by a number of writers. The intricacies of the relationship between the philosophies of the two men has been analyzed in great detail by A. Henry in Bergson, Maître de Péguy (Ed. Elzévir, 1948), by S.W. Taylor in a thesis, Péguy and contemporary idealism (Bristol Ph.D., 1957) and more recently by A. Robinet in his Péguy entre Jaurès, Bergson et l'Eglise (Seghers, 1968). The research of the latter is very thorough, although the conclusions he reaches are often deliberately controversial. La pensée de Charles Péguy (Oeuvres, E. Mounier, Ed. du Seuil, 1961), written jointly by E. Mounier, G. Izard and M. Péguy, also considers the influence of Bergson in such areas.

The similarities between Péguy's ideas and Bergson's are numerous. What makes such a study very complicated is the fact that Péguy unfailingly transformed Bergson's ideas and related them to his own preoccupations in other fields; for instance, those of sociology, theology, history and political action. Very few of Bergson's ideas are straightforwardly reiterated in Péguy's work. As E. Mounier rightly argued:

Il ne fait jamais appel aux parties les plus systématiques de l'oeuvre de Bergson. Il la saisit à la fois en deça et au-delà d'elle-même; en deça, en laissant tomber ce qui peut-être caduc; au-delà, en explorant ses sources du côté de l'héritage classique et de la pensée chrétienne où il la voit directement insérée, et à l'autre bout en allant, parmi l'expérience de chaque jour, à la rencontre de prolongements inattendus ... (La Pensée de Charles Péguy, p. 27).

For this reason it is difficult to be precise about the areas of Bergson's philosophy which Péguy took to heart. It is always necessary to explain just how he adopted them. Sometimes critics have contented themselves with general comments, like these of Jean Onimus:

Bergson ... avait révélé à Péguy la fécondité cosmique ... (Introduction aux trois Mystères, p. 72);

l'espérance est un pur élan ... Cette espérance prise à son point de jaillissement le plus humble est, tout simplement, l'élan vital (Id.);

l'espérance de Péguy ce n'est d'abord rien d'autre que la durée bergsonienne (Id.).

Certain of Péguy's ideas relate to the whole of Bergson's thought and not to one aspect only, as is clearly the case in Péguy's two articles on Bergson. Therefore, any one-to-one correspondence between their ideas is inevitably superficial. To read Devaux's summary of their agreements is to lose the flavour of both philosophies and to reduce their ideas to caricatures:

- accord sur la définition même de la philosophie comme effort pour étreindre la réalité,
- accord sur la primauté de l'intuition par rapport au concept,
- accord sur l'opposition de la durée vécue à la spacialité,
- accord sur l'idée que l'unité est derrière nous et non devant nous,
- accord sur la relation entre l'éternité vivante, 'concrétion de toute durée' (P.M., p. 1419) et la temporalité successive;
- accord sur la subordination du langage à la pensée,
- accord sur la distinction entre le 'se-faisant' et le 'tout fait',
- accord pour se méfier de toute dialectique
("D'un malentendu entre Péguy et Bergson", Revue d'Histoire littéraire de France, March-June 1973, p. 282).

This might not be incorrect but it is too simplistic. It would be a better policy to show where Péguy and Bergson were in disagreement. For the most part, Péguy adopted Bergson's philosophy as his own, although, whereas Péguy was a committed man of action, Bergson was a detached, technical philosopher. A-A. Devaux is far more convincing when he keeps to a narrower range; for instance, in demonstrating that Péguy was not enthusiastic over the publication of L'Evolution Créatrice and that he had serious reservations about it, speaking of it as a good philosophy "qui est venue au monde parmi les modernes, dans le temps moderne", but one which: "de ce qu'elle est contemporaine des modernes vient précisément de recevoir ... quelques atteintes,

quelques commencements de contamination" (Un poète l'a dit, Gallimard, 1953, p. 60).

Péguy evinced a profound mistrust of progress in any form and in his eyes "l'évolution est, finalement, vue beaucoup plus comme décréatrice que comme créatrice" (Devaux, Op. cit., p. 282). Bergson's optimism and belief in the future greatness of man¹ clashed with Péguy's sense of original sin and his belief in the 'dégradation', 'déperdition' and 'vieillissement' of the material world. This is well discussed in A. Pilkington's Bergson and his influence (C.U.P., 1976). It is clear that Péguy thought that 'la durée réelle' implied ageing and decomposition: "La durée réelle, mon ami, celle qui sera toujours nommée la durée bergsonienne, la durée organique, la durée de l'événement et de la réalité implique essentiellement le vieillissement" (Oeuvres en Prose II, 1909-1914, Bib. de la Pléiade, 1961, p. 130). Péguy goes further still:

Il y a une déperdition, une perte perpétuelle, une usure, un frottement inévitable ... un irréversible qui est dans la nature même, dans l'essence et dans l'événement, au coeur même de l'événement (Oeuvres II, pp. 127-128).

Besides his disbelief in progress, Péguy also disbelieved in the intellectual unification of life. He opposed Jaurès's monist conception of reality and attacked any sign of it in L'Evolution Créatrice. Péguy is sure that Bergson's earlier works are on the right track, emphasizing pluralism, variety and individuality. In his attack on Jaurès, Réponse

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1. E.g., see E.C., p. 725, "l'humanité entière, dans l'espace et dans le temps, est une immense armée qui galope à côté de chacun de nous, ... dans une charge entraînante capable de culbuter toutes les résistances et de franchir bien des obstacles, même peut-être la mort". This is repudiated by and large in Les Deux Sources (see pp. 1226-1227). There, the 'élan vital' is a 'vertical' inspiration drawing men to God and not a temporal force giving hope for future perfection; there, progress requires moral advancement as a necessity.

brève à Jaurès, he wrote:

Ce classement symétrique et facile des hommes et des événements, ce rude classement clair et faux des simples idées me rappelle un peu les articulations de M. Brunetière (Oeuvres I, p. 242).

The reduction of individuals to the mass, of life to a single principle, is always false and oversimplified, according to Péguy. Thus, a third possible error of judgement in L'Evolution Créatrice is that Bergson is given to too much generalization and too much detachment from the particular, the specific, which is in fact complex and multifarious:

... la destination du philosophe n'est pas même de mener, elle est de se mener, non pas à vrai, ce que nous laissons aux logiciens et aux juges d'instruction, mais à réel (Deuxième Elégie, XXX, Gallimard, 1955, pp. 75-76).

And being more precise in his criticism, Péguy says in Un poète l'a dit:

"Nous aurons à nous demander s'il n'y a point des parties de l'E.C. qui sont seulement vraies. Qui ne sont malheureusement que vraies" (p. 171).

For Péguy, Bergson has almost constructed an intellectual system (like the positivists) instead of earthing all his conclusions in an analysis of the specific. The phrase "tout se passe comme si ..." (E.C., pp. 704, 721, et al.) typifies this new approach.

A fourth area of disagreement centres on the relationship between science and metaphysics. In "Introduction à la métaphysique" (P.M., p. 1424), Bergson expresses the hope that "une philosophie véritablement intuitive réaliserait l'union tant désirée de la métaphysique et la science". For Péguy, such a coincidence is virtually impossible, because, for him, metaphysics relies on direct intuitive knowledge from the inside of life (involvement in action) while physics is indirect knowledge, 'objectively' ministered by the senses from the external world. This distinction is itself derived from the early Bergson and so, in Péguy's opinion, this must

be more a case of Bergson's betraying his own principles rather than a fundamental disagreement.

However much Péguy may have been disappointed by L'Evolution Créatrice, he nonetheless made extensive use of it. It is difficult to pinpoint exact quotations, but Onimus points out Péguy's indebtedness to the idea of 'l'élan vital' in interpreting Péguy's conception of 'hope':

Elle [l'espérance] ne tire pas vers un but prévu d'avance mais elle pousse devant elle les léchets de la vie, la lourde masse inerte de la matière morte, des habitudes, des mécanismes tout faits; elle filtre à travers malheurs, déceptions, apathies. Elle soulève le poids colossal de nos lassitudes. Brusquement elle jaillit, venue de sources oubliées de notre enfance, de notre race, de nos traditions: c'est, en un mot, la vie qui nous travaille ("Introduction aux trois Mystères", Cahiers de l'Amitié Charles Péguy, p. 72).

This illustrates perfectly the way in which Péguy adopts and then adapts Bergson's philosophy to suit his own purposes.

Péguy's disillusionment with Bergsonism coincided with his own spiritual crisis and subsequent adoption of Christianity, but later he reconciled the two in a remarkable synthesis, coming to realize at the end of his life that, just as Bergson, his master, had provided insights into every area of life before his conversion, so he could continue to provide insights in the world of the spirit.

Overall, Péguy cannot be considered as a philosopher in the strict sense of the word; his writings lack technical precision and he does not accord to any subject a systematic, objective analysis of its nature and aspects. Rather, Péguy is a writer who gives a general expression to his personal preoccupations. Sometimes there is a more self-conscious concentration on the literary devices and techniques necessary to a particular genre; sometimes there is more concentration on the abstract ideas and philosophy behind a subject. But, whether he is concerned with the style or the ideas,

Péguy's main aim is to communicate something real to his experience, something true to life, in the most effective way possible. Sometimes Péguy tries to evoke or conjure up the richness of an experience; sometimes he is concerned to show the inner significance, the importance or the meaning of that experience. Greater stress on the one results in poetic expression; greater emphasis on the other in philosophical expression. But both are forms of insight or vision.

Jean Onimus all too often treats the poetry as embellished thought, as thinly-disguised philosophy. Chapter IV of his work Incarnation¹ is typically entitled "La Pensée incarnée" and this seems to be his assessment of Péguy's poetry in general. Instead of drawing comparisons with other contemporary poets, he finishes by placing Péguy rather incongruously side by side with the Catholic modernist philosophers and theologians:

Il y a bien des rapports entre l'attitude de Péguy en face de l'Eglise et celle des modernistes. Tous deux ont les mêmes adversaires et luttent contre les mêmes abus... (p. 209).

Onimus ignores the fact that Péguy was an opponent of 'modernists' of all kinds - the word itself was anathema to him. But more important, Onimus seems to assume that Péguy's main raison d'être is to be an abstract thinker.

André Robinet similarly aligns Péguy with the philosophers and thinkers in his Péguy entre Jaurès, Bergson et l'Eglise (Seghers, 1968). Here again the leading question appears to be the ideology to which Péguy adhered most - the Socialist, Bergsonian or the orthodox Christian. Péguy also receives a rather abstract analysis from E. Mounier, M. Péguy and G. Izard in La Pensée de Charles Péguy², and again the very title itself betrays the intention of

1. Incarnation: Essai sur la pensée de Péguy (C.A.C.P., 1952).

2. In E. Mounier: Oeuvres 1931-1939, Ed. du Seuil, 1961.

the writers to extract from the undergrowth of stylistic repetition and decoration some clear and distinct ideas. The basic assumption is that Péguy is really a philosopher who rather spoils his arguments with diversions, poetry and general verbosity.

On the other hand, there has recently been a strong tendency to regard Péguy as primarily a political activist and theorist. Such an approach is adopted by N. Jussem-Wilson (Charles Péguy, Bowes & Bowes, London, 1965); Hans Schmidt (Charles Péguy; the decline of an idealist, Louisiana State University Press, 1967); Roger Secrétain (Péguy, soldat de la vérité, Lib. Acad. Perrin, 1972); and M. Villiers (Charles Péguy; a study in integrity, Collins, London, 1965). The emphasis of these works is upon Péguy the man of action and therefore Péguy's political ideals and moral convictions become all-important.

The prevailing trend is thus to treat Péguy as a man of ideas - whether they be philosophical, political or religious - and this was in evidence at the Péguy symposium of December 1973 held at Reading. The titles of several lectures will make this clear: "Péguy et la crise de la liberté" (F. Field, Keele); "Péguy, Bergson et le concept du héros" (S. Taylor, Bristol); "La cité harmonieuse; une cité anarchiste" (N. Wilson, Bristol); and "Péguy and the rhetoric of populism" (J. Coombes, Essex).

The smaller number of critics who have set out to redress the balance - to consider Péguy as a poet first and foremost - have often flown to the other extreme, concentrating on style in technical terms above all else. In L'Art de Péguy (C.A.C.P., 1948), Bernard Guyon explains that Péguy had not up till then been discussed as a poet of merit, let alone one of genius. He adds that, in his opinion, "juger Péguy exclusivement comme écrivain, c'est de toute façon le trahir" (p. 5). Guyon does, however, mention Albert Béguin's La Prière de Péguy (Cahiers du Rhone, 1942), which is the

earliest full-length account of Péguy as a poet. Unfortunately, Guyon makes no mention of A. Chabanon's La Poétique de Péguy (R. Laffont, 6th ed. 1947 [first pub. 1942]). This is possibly the best work on Péguy's style and literary theory, avoiding much of the analytical dissecting procedures of later writings. After Guyon there were a number of works on specific poems by Péguy, analyzed to the last syllable. Jean Onimus contributed to these with his L'Image dans l'Eve de Péguy (1952), Introduction aux quatrains de Péguy (1954) and Introduction aux trois mystères de Péguy (1962) (C.A.C.P.).

R.J. Nelson's broader-based study, Péguy, poète du sacré (C.A.C.P., 1960), summarizes the discoveries of Péguy's critics in this field, but does not depart from the method of scientific analysis used by his predecessors. He draws up long catalogues of words and phrases used to illustrate this or that idea in Péguy. The signal danger of such an approach is clearly that it can assume a one-to-one relationship between images and abstract ideas. In turn, this can tend to subordinate the imagery and style to the philosophy. The following phrase illustrates this point:

Le mal comme le bien est liquide chez Péguy. L'eau est donc la grâce, mais elle est encore davantage. Elle est l'esprit de Dieu qui travaille les hommes et l'esprit de Satan qui les met à l'épreuve. Nous l'appelons donc ESPRIT dans un sens absolu (p. 29).

An obsession with finding 'correspondences' leads Nelson to this rather inane conclusion:

L'emploi d'un nombre d'images relativement réduit exige que le poète se serve de chacune pour désigner plusieurs choses. Ainsi le bourgeon qui représente la naissance de l'enfant sert aussi à désigner l'espérance (p. 46).

The point about poetry is not to find synonyms for abstract words. Such an idea tends to accentuate the separation between the ideas and their

expression. The philosophy should not dominate the poetry or form of expression too much, otherwise this becomes artificial and forced - a mere vehicle for ideas. In Péguy's own mind, the mode of expression is very much part of the idea itself. If expressed in a different way, the ideas themselves become different. What if the writer clothes the boring truth in interesting language or embellishes the plain truth with complex niceties, instead of, as Péguy puts it, "dire bêtement la vérité bête, ennuyeusement la vérité ennuyeuse, tristement la vérité triste ..." (Oeuvres I, p. 94, "Lettre du provincial").

The separation of Péguy's work into poetry and prose is attacked by Père Pie Duployé, O.P., in La Religion de Péguy (Eds. Klinksieck, 1965):

Il n'y a pas un Péguy qui fait de la prose et un Péguy
qui fait des vers, - et c'est pourtant sur cette base
malheureuse que s'est faite l'édition dite de la Pléiade
(p. xxii).

He takes Albert Béguin to task for attempting to detach the intellectual framework of Eve from the poetry, arguing that Béguin "s'est cru obligé de se substituer à Péguy pour établir dans Eve un ordre que Péguy n'a nulle part déclaré" (p. 309), and insisting on "l'irréductibilité de l'expérience poétique" (p. 309).

Duployé's point is in fact supported by Péguy himself in the brief article he called "Le Durel":

C'est le propre d'un poème comme Eve qu'il est absolument impossible d'y desceller les plus grandes considérations philosophiques de la construction générale. La pensée est si serrée qu'elle se refuse aux fragmentations de l'analyse, et ce n'est qu'en s'imposant de considérer le poème comme un immense traité qu'on pourrait essayer d'en établir le sommaire (Quoted from L'Eve de Péguy by 1 A. Béguin, Labergerie, 1948, p. 216).

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1. This article first appeared in Lettres et Entretiens (Ed. M. Péguy, Eds. de Paris, 1954) and is reprinted in Béguin's work, pp. 208-221.

Duployé, almost alone among critics, proposes in his book to "procéder à la rectification des frontières qui, dans la mentalité contemporaine, séparent le domaine de la théologie et celui de la littérature" (p. 1). He also regards the image as of prime importance, not just as a vehicle for ideas, but as a necessary and indivisible part of the communication:

Dans la démarche de Péguy, on n'aura donc besoin de plaquer l'idée sur l'image, de demander à l'idée une intelligibilité qui serait radicalement distincte de l'intelligibilité latente de l'image (p. 333).

He calls the image "la matière esthétique de l'idée" (p. vii). Part of the function of an image is to encourage patterns of thought by allusion - "Eve est un livre qui ne parle que par allusion" (p. 318) - and by liturgy - "Plus on étudie Eve ... plus on y reconnaît cette inspiration de la liturgie catholique latine, dont Péguy était un familier" (pp. 327-328).

Nevertheless, Péguy's literary style is not simply poetic techniques self-consciously employed for special effects; there is a sense in which it is always the spontaneous and natural means of communication for a man of his temperament and attitudes; it is the result of a desire to produce something not only true to life but true to himself.

Clearly, Péguy's style cannot always easily be separated into what constitutes 'poetry' and what constitutes 'philosophy'; there are elements of both in either. The 'style' of the philosophy has a poetic content, just as the poetic writings have a philosophical content. Roméo Arbour (H. Bergson et les lettres françaises, Corti, 1956), rightly argues that "le style de Péguy est celui d'un poète, sa prose tend à la poésie" (p. 299). It is equally true to say, without wishing to confuse the genres, that his poetry tends towards prose. For example, words like 'l'argent', 'politique' and 'le monde moderne' possess much poetic symbolism, while certain long distiches in the poetry are certainly prosaic, if not pedestrian. It is

the general inspiration behind Péguy's literary style as a whole which is to be briefly examined here.

The style and literary techniques arise naturally, not only from Péguy's articulated conception of life, but also from his instincts and intuitions about the nature of things. Sometimes he writes in order to elucidate to himself the exact significance of a certain topic or event. Whether he is writing at the level of self-conscious expression or at the level of sensation and intuition, the same elements can be detected in his style. This is because Péguy does not consider the prime function of language to lie in the communication of ideas in the sense of intellectual stimulation and argument. Instead, he considers that its aim is to evoke, to conjure up, to 're-produce' in oneself or another person, a certain experience of life. In other words, Péguy is intending to communicate an experience either from his own store of memories or from someone else's. This is why he lays such stress on memory - the most vivid apprehension of the past. Speaking of a Christian friend who endured great suffering, Péguy writes of that man's feelings:

Je pourrais les analyser, docteur, mais non pas sans faire des recherches longues et difficiles parmi les souvenirs de ma mémoire. Et quand dans les connaissances de ma mémoire je me serais représenté les images des sentiments de mon ami, j'aurais à vous les présenter. Comment vous présenter ces nuances parfaitement délicates? ... (Oeuvres I, pp. 159-160, "Encore de la grippe", c.f. p. 189).

This gives an excellent clue as to the inspiration behind Péguy's literary style - and one of utmost importance: for Péguy it is the flux of life which determines the style and not the style which manipulates our sensibility: "l'art n'est rien s'il n'est point une étreinte ajustée de quelque réalité" (Oeuvres II, p. 891, "Les suppliants parallèles").

This also explains why Péguy laid such stress on vision, awareness, vigilance and receptivity throughout his writings:

Le réel est le grand maître et quand on fait de l'histoire il est le seul maître; et quand on conte un événement, fut-il récent de cinq minutes, on fait de l'histoire ... (Oeuvres I, p. 446, "Personnalités").

Conversely, this fact explains why Péguy was so violently opposed to the dessication and division of real life effected by academic scholarship which tries to replace events and history by lists of facts, accounts, summaries and collections of card-indices ('fiches'): "La réalité est ce qu'elle est, non, nullement ce qu'elle rend à l'enregistrement" (Oeuvres II, p. 35). Péguy's Clio, the goddess of history, exclaims: "avec ce système de fiches mes histoires ne font jamais que commencer" (Oeuvres II, p. 238) and then asks of the historian, "Qu'eût-ce été s'il ne se fut point agi d'un texte mais d'un mouvement même, d'une idée, de réalité, de vie?" (p. 241).

So, if words relate to an experience fuller and richer than the content of a single word or of a factual description, then Péguy's style will bear this out by the use of repetition, synonym and by an embellishment and elaboration of the simple facts. Here is an example of this technique, where Péguy illustrates vividly the mental agonies required in making a commitment, becoming involved:

... s'il ne veut pas choisir, dans son fol orgueil de savant moderne, s'il refuse formellement de choisir, il choisit quand même, car il choisit l'écrasement, l'inexistence et la stérilité; s'il refuse formellement de choisir, dans ses matériaux, s'il ne veut en laisser tomber aucun, c'est lui qui tombe, et il choisit de n'être plus.

Au contraire, s'il choisit, par lassitude, par consentement, par méthode, par faiblesse; par accommodation, par humanité, s'il consent à choisir, quelle effrayante responsabilité; choisir parmi les hommes et les événements, choisir parmi tous les éléments de la réalité, de la même réalité ... condamner à mort totale des éléments de la réalité que la réalité n'avaient point rejetés (Oeuvres I, p. 741, "Un essai de monopole").

The philosophy and poetry are clearly seen here going together cheek by jowl. There is no artificial division in Péguy's mind. As he himself states:

C'est le propre d'un poète ... de saisir d'un mot, ... de ramasser en un mot toute la réalité profondément essentielle d'une histoire, d'un mouvement, d'un geste individuel ou collectif ... (Oeuvres I, p. 902, "Les suppliants parallèles").

This desire to represent the tapestry of life as a whole, all of a piece, is something Péguy derives from Bergson's philosophy of intuition and intelligence. Bergson asserts that it is the function of intelligence to segregate, separate and divide into parts. If one attempts the "reconstruction de toutes choses, même la vie", one achieves only "une image symbolique" (L'Evolution Créatrice, p. 490). The conclusion that follows is this: "Notre pensée, sous sa forme purement logique, est incapable de se représenter la vraie nature de la vie" (p. 489). In particular, the analytical historian fails to grasp the life of the past and "ne retient des choses que l'aspect répétition. Si le tout est original elle s'arrange pour l'analyser en éléments ou en aspects qui soient à peu près la reproduction du passé" (p. 519, italics in original).

By the use of repetition and the insistent march of a regular rhythm (and sometimes an irregular one), Péguy, imitating the process of musical incantation, calls into being the elusive sense of real life. He breathes life into the inert words by stimulating the imagination and awakening the memory to bring back the ghosts of the past as real presences. As Jean Onimus says:

La vision de Péguy est poétique parce qu'elle va bien au-delà des fictions abstraites et qu'elle s'efforce de saisir le concret par le concret. Les images de l'espérance ne sont pas des métaphores ou des allégories avec tout ce que cela suppose de littéraire et de gratuit. Ce sont des intuitions et toute la 'musique' des Mystères n'a d'autre but que de rendre sensibles ces intuitions

(Introduction aux trois Mystères, p. 59).

Péguy's use of the image of a child does more than simply to symbolize hope: it brings home the vital, life-like feeling of hope. The child has all the qualities of hope; but there is no need to list these in abstract terms such as joy, innocence, ingenuousness, trust and the like. It is enough to awaken the sense of hope in the reader by placing before his imagination the image of the child:

Ce qui m'étonne, dit Dieu, c'est l'espérance.
Et je n'en reviens pas.
Cette petite espérance qui n'a l'air de rien du tout.
Cette petite fille espérance.
Immortelle
(Oeuvres Poétiques, p. 535, "Le Porche de la deuxième vertu").

In short, Péguy's use of imagery, far from being a picture-substitute for an idea, actually stimulates and creates ideas as a by-product of its powerful effect on the imagination.

Péguy's images are similar to Bergson's 'image médiatrice' (P.M., p. 1347) and his concept of the image is like Bergson's idea of the 'schéma dynamique' (Energie Spirituelle, p. 946). The 'image médiatrice' is, like Péguy's image, an attempt to pin down and capture accurately something fleetingly intuited, be it an abstract or a concrete perception:

L'effort intellectuel pour interpréter, comprendre, faire attention, est donc un mouvement du 'schéma dynamique' dans la direction de l'image qui le développe. C'est une transformation continue de relations abstraites, suggérées par les objets perçus, en images concrètes, capables de recouvrir ces objets (Ibid., "L'Effort intellectuel").

Poetic expression lies mid-way between insight and explanation, mid-way between vision and description. Something of the freshness of the original vision or insight is retained:

Ce que nous arriverons à ressaisir et à fixer, c'est une certaine image intermédiaire entre la simplicité de l'intuition concrète et la complexité des abstractions

qui la traduisent, image fuyante et évanouissante ... qui, ... si elle n'est pas l'intuition même, s'en rapproche beaucoup plus que l'expression conceptuelle ... à laquelle l'intuition doit recourir pour fournir des 'explications' (P.M., p. 1347, "L'Intuition philosophique").

The repetition of a single image with slightly different nuances of meaning each time serves to render a memory or experience so vivid in the mind that it seems to take on all the radiance and reality of a present perception. It creates in the consciousness the sense of presence and the flavour of real life.

For Bergson, the image has a mediating role between life inside and outside the mind. He examines the relationship between them in "L'Effort intellectuel" (p. 946) as follows:

-- La perception-brute ... suggère une représentation schématique de l'ensemble et, par là, des relations des parties entre elles. Développant ce schéma en images-souvenirs, nous cherchons à faire coïncider ces images-souvenirs avec les images perçues ... Et toujours la partie positive, utile, de ce travail consiste à marcher du schéma à l'image perçue ...

In a real sense, material reality is an image as well, so the hope remains for Bergson to form a unity and harmony between life and thought (the expression of which is language). The natural direction of intelligence is away from life, either towards action (manipulation of the environment) or towards speculation (the forming of abstract relations), but this trend has to be reversed in the interests of true representation.

Péguy similarly tried to achieve a coincidence between life and thought through language; hence the paramount importance of style - the use of words and images to reflect and match up to reality.

Bergson's idea affects not only present perception but past history as well. The conventional historian does not apprehend past time as a once living reality experienced by real people, but compresses it into an analysis

of states and situations. This compression of history and real life by language is vehemently opposed by Péguy, whose aim is not to eliminate the soul - 'la durée réelle' - from the event, but rather to restore it.

The historian betrays real life because "il manquerait le lent travail, l'irréversible, l'incompressible, l'irrecommençable, l'élaboration de l'histoire propre, l'élaboration, la vieille, l'antique élaboration de l'histoire qu'on ne peut pas hâter. Non seulement que l'on ne refait pas, mais que l'on ne hâte pas" (Oeuvres II, p. 666). The style here is as important as the meaning, for the two complement one another. The idea explains; the expression demonstrates.

History is not just a series of facts about a dead world; it comprises other people's experience of life. It is Péguy's contention that life goes on and men's basic experiences do not change, although their attitude to events might do so. Comparing Christ's time with our own, Péguy writes: "c'était le même monde / et c'était pourtant le même homme" (Oeuvres poétiques, p. 472, "Mystère de la Charité"). And elsewhere Péguy writes: "Vous aussi chrétiens, vous ne connaissez pas aussi votre bonheur / votre bonheur présent, qui est le même bonheur ..." (Id., p. 413). The upshot of this fact is that, if God once came to man's everyday experience vividly, then he is always potentially present to any man at any time in the same way.

Furthermore, history literally lives on in the collective memory of any given society: "L'histoire est parallèle à l'événement; la mémoire lui est centrale et axiale" (Oeuvres II, p. 270, "Clio"). Michelet is Péguy's best-loved historian since he poetically attempts to recreate the atmosphere of past events.

Péguy often refers to Bergson's 'mémoire pure' to justify his views on

history, and this is to be distinguished from 'mémoire habitude'¹. Whereas the historians all too often make use of an intellectual memory of facts, the poet lives close to sensation. Bergson writes: "De ces deux mémoires, dont l'une imagine et l'autre répète, la seconde peut suppléer la première et souvent même en donner l'illusion" (Matière et Mémoire, p. 228). The faculty of imagination is close to that of recognition - the past as relived - whereas any repetition of the past relies on an intellectual faculty which recalls the idea of a past event. The latter requires a mechanical remembering of facts, the former an evocation of events: "pour évoquer le passé sous forme d'image, il faut pouvoir s'abstraire de l'action présente ... il faut vouloir rêver" (Id., p. 228).

The common Bergsonian word to describe reality as ongoing is 'la durée'. Péguy makes reference to it in this way: "Quand on dit que le temps passe, on a tout dit" (Oeuvres II, p. 165, "Clio"). If historians and philosophers write as though time has no meaning, for Péguy it is the very vehicle, the container, the context of real life. For him, the real world is characterized by "un rythme de durée, réelle, qu'il faut bien nommer la durée bergsonienne" (Oeuvres II, p. 132). The mistake of most writers is to compress or expand or extend real time as though it were a quantity of elastic. Péguy, by way of contrast, maintains that events are lived according to a rhythm of their own:

... il est presque impossible de ne pas se demander si le monde même n'a pas une durée qui ne serait que sous-entendue et enregistrée par le temps du monde; mais concordant tout de même avec le temps du monde; s'il n'y a pas un rythme et une vitesse propre de l'événement du monde; et des ventres et des noeuds (Oeuvres II, p. 298, "Clio").

Clearly, Bergson's theories about time had for Péguy the impact of revelations

1. This distinction is outlined in Matière et Mémoire, Chapters 2 and 3.

or disclosures about the nature of reality and had a far more profound effect than a theory with which one agrees or disagrees.

The use of rhythm and metre in Péguy's writing becomes in effect an imitation of the process of life itself. Rhythm instils life and vigour and transforms a series of 'still photographs' into a drama where movement and change have an essential place. Jean Onimus brings out this aspect of Péguy's writing very well:

Péguy s'attache avant tout à ralentir la lecture, tantôt par l'usage du verset, les blancs, les jeux de scène, les phrases en suspens, tantôt par le volume verbal ou la simple répétition. C'est un art qui vise à la contemplation: favoriser par la stagnation relative de la pensée et le bruitage des mots une imprégnation de la conscience, une pénétration intime de l'émotion (Introduction aux trois mystères, p. 31).

Péguy's concentration on 'la durée' leads him often to employ images of growth and creation - the 'jaillissement' of real life:

Cette éternelle nouveauté qu'il y a dans l'enfance,
Et qui est le grand secret de ma grâce.
Cette renaissante, cette perpétuellement renaissante,
Cette éternellement renaissante nouveauté
(Oeuvres poétiques, p. 808, "Le mystère des saints innocents").

There is an essential creativity and dynamism at the heart of all life. In "Le mystère des saints innocents" Péguy's 'God' says that man's liberty of thought and action "est un reflet de ma Liberté / qui est le secret même et le mystère / et le centre et le coeur et le germe de ma Création" (Id., p. 719).

Because 'la durée réelle' is the vehicle of change in the world, then Péguy's vision of life is necessarily dynamic, hopeful and expectant. He is always waiting for some unexpected word or idea to make itself known. New ideas and new images are constantly emerging from the main body of the text in Péguy's writings. No one idea is hermetic, no one thought excludes another; in fact, in Péguy one idea gives rise to or provokes another: "une

idée toute faite ... est totalement étrangère à la germination, à la fécondité, à la conception" (Oeuvres II, p. 1320). Péguy's creativity somehow tries to reflect the self-renewing novelty of creation itself. Jean Onimus relates this aspect of Péguy's style directly to Bergson's philosophy:

En face du lourd et désespérant déterminisme hérité de Comte, aggravé par Taine, Bergson proposait à l'homme l'exaltante intuition de la vie qui est profusion, spontanéité pure, hasard et liberté. Le monde redevenait respirable. Aux grossièretés du mécanisme se substituaient les délicates poétiques intuitions de la qualité (Introduction aux trois Mystères, p. 66).

Bernard Guyon recognizes the creative energy displayed by Péguy's scattering of a profusion of images: "nous sommes éblouis par l'abondance, l'originalité, la perpétuelle nouveauté des images" (L'Art de Péguy, p. 57). This reflects the energy in creation at large, as Péguy describes it at the beginning of "La présentation de la Beauce":

Etoile de la mer, voici la lourde nappe
Et la profonde houle et l'océan de blés
Et la mouvante écume et nos greniers comblés,
Voici votre regard sur cette immense chape ...
(Oeuvres poétiques, p. 896).

The energy and teeming abundance of life conjured up by Péguy's use of imagery also recalls the multifarious and creative energy of 'l'élan vital' in Bergson's L'Evolution Créatrice and Péguy himself states: "Je vois partout dans Bergson le souci de la considération du réel pur" (Oeuvres II, p. 1324).

Péguy's vision of creation precludes any artificial unification of life according to a system or set of principles. Life is essentially multifarious

Je n'éprouve aucun besoin d'unifier le monde. Plus je vais, plus je découvre que les hommes libres et que les événements libres sont variés (I, Casse-Cou, p. 321).

Péguy returns to this idea in a slightly altered form in Note sur M. Bergson, where he speaks of different 'royaumes' in life (II, p. 1314). For Péguy

there are as many 'royaumes' - realms of life - as there are different 'qualities' or nuances of the emotional life. Life is absolutely heterogeneous. One area cannot be reduced to another, nor can one thing be explained in terms of something else. The crassness of modern civilization, according to Péguy, consists in this, that everything is reduced to the terms of finance or economics:

Pour la première fois dans l'histoire du monde toutes les puissances spirituelles ensemble ... ont été refoulées par une seule puissance matérielle qui est la puissance de l'argent (Oeuvres II, p. 1530, "Note conjointe").

In the realm of poetry this means that a profusion, even a confusion, of images best expresses life, which can never be fully 'explained' or 'described'. It is too diverse, too profound and too complex to be understood properly by a finite intellect. Furthermore, words cannot be commensurate with the reality they describe. It will always present new aspects which in turn require description. As Chabanon says of Péguy:

Il lui en faut des foules, des successions infinies, des séries interminables; car l'objet de la poésie, le réel complexe et subtil est un objet immense, inexhaustible (La Poétique de Péguy, pp. 17-18).

This also goes some way to indicating why Péguy never corrects or erases any of his own writings, as his son remarked:

Jamais il ne se corrigeait. Il n'y a pas plus de dix mots raturés dans la plupart de ses ouvrages. Par contre il lui arrivait de compléter ses textes, soit en relisant son manuscrit, soit lors de la correction des épreuves (L'Anthologie des écrivains morts à la guerre 1914-1918, M. Péguy, Malfère, Amiens, 1925, p. 525).

Péguy's first impressions are constantly deepened and made more specific by later insertions and additions but they remain valid in their own right simply because they are first impressions, closest to the original inspiration.

On the other hand, Péguy is also scrupulous and meticulous in his choice

of words, in the determination of detail and in the subtle expression of nuance. To attain some degree of order and discipline in the writing he makes repeated use of certain key words and phrases. R.J. Nelson, in Péguy, poète du sacré, detects "une vingtaine de symboles importants". These include "la terre, l'eau, la pierre, les plantes, le jour et la nuit, les saisons, les routes, les tissus et les vêtements" (pp. 13-14). From this list it is conspicuous that all the images are taken from the natural world, from a life lived in the open air and at liberty. But what is not so frequently realized is that Péguy also used a good many abstract words as symbols too. These include 'la rigidité et la souplesse' (e.g. Oeuvres poétiques, pp. 176, 384, 1235), 'le droit et le courbe' (pp. 420, 650, 1360), 'le plat et l'ondulé' (pp. 538, 648, 650), 'l'ordre et le désordre' (p. 317), 'le carré et le rond' (pp. 420, 421, 1199) and 'la contrainte et la liberté' (pp. 205, 217, 354-355). One abstract expression could be replaced by another. 'La rigidité et la souplesse' could be thought to represent 'life' as opposed to 'mechanism', or it could represent the life of 'précarité' as opposed to the life of habit; or it could stand for grace as opposed to sin. Similarly, 'le droit et le courbe' could 'mean' moral virtue and moral decline, or alternatively discipline and indiscipline, or again, true growth and sickly growth. But there really are no equivalents in words alone: the image relates to something true about life; it only relates in a secondary way to other ideas and words.

Returning to 'la durée', in Péguy's writing it is true to say that his verses are mostly constructed according to a set rhythm, although this is rarely consistently regular¹. Péguy loathes hierarchical immobility, artificial or static arrangements. Péguy's idea of real order is very

1. But note the alexandrines of Eve and the various regular quatrains in Péguy's poetry.

much that of a process like growth - hence his taste for the word 'organique'. Such a process may seem to be chaotic but all the while follows a pattern and rhythm which is inexorable:

Toute la fécondité et toute la discipline; tout le jaillissement et tout l'ordre, tout le jaillissement dans le germe et tout l'ordre dans l'épi, elle est également opposée aux fécondités de désordre et aux stérilités d'ordre (Writing on Eve, 4.1.14, Lettres et Entretiens, Cahiers XVIII-I, p. 174).

To reproduce reality, to describe accurately what is truly seen or known, is for Péguy a moral discipline which requires "exactitude, ponctualité, géométrie, probité, honnêteté, dureté, nudité, pauvreté dans l'initial" (Id., pp. 177-178). What Péguy hates are mannerisms, affectation, falsity and frivolity. All these become symbols of detachment from life, which is a serious erring from the truth. His descriptions, if verbose, are invariably sincere. His ideal is to "refaire un public ami de la vérité sincère, de la beauté ..." (Oeuvres I, p. 467). He is consequently an admirer of classical precision rather than romantic effusiveness. The classical writer can be closer to reality - he is objective - whereas the romantic writer indulges his own taste for excess in the realm of feelings and ideas. For Péguy, classicism has a certain moral discipline which is to strip all embellishment from the truth. This may sometimes - and particularly in Péguy's case - demand elaboration in order to come to a closer and closer approximation to the truth, but sometimes it suffices to use a single word. Péguy's wordiness is therefore an attempt at exactitude and precision rather than its opposite:

Vingt ans de prose ont enseigné à Péguy cette sorte de probité dure qu'il a transportée dans ses vers ... D'où le mot est constamment juste, d'une justesse technique, non point que l'auteur ait fait des vers de prosateur, mais il a fait de vers de poète avec une sorte de marbre

de prose (Lettres et Entretiens, Cahiers XVIII-I, p. 195)¹.

Péguy does not intend to dispel and diffuse the pungent and concentrated sense of life, but rather to intensify it with more and more additions and qualifications.

This desire to convey all the aspects and nuances of a subject owes something to Bergson's comments on words in L'Essai:

Nous nous exprimons nécessairement par des mots, et nous pensons le plus souvent dans l'espace. En d'autres termes, le langage exige que nous établissions entre nos idées les mêmes distinctions nettes et précises, la même discontinuité qu'entre les objets matériels (p. 3).

Therefore, Péguy uses two seemingly contradictory stylistic methods. First, he uses a great many words in order to create a broad general impression without the limitations of one or two words. In this case, the words tend to merge and lose their separate identity. The words are like the notes of a musical score. They are separated physically but are united at a deeper level, forming an indivisible whole.

But, using the opposite technique, Péguy might employ one word which nevertheless becomes stretched and expanded to cover a multitude of meanings. A single word can then have many and varied connotations². Such words are 'la mer', 'l'argent' and 'politique' and 'mystique', used in many places and different contexts. This technique can again be compared to a musical score. This time the rhythm is not complex; it is incantatory and repetitive. The one repeated word is like the recurring theme of the work.

Bergson conceived linguistic expression in terms of a musical movement as well:

1. Péguy wrote this and persuaded Lotte to give his name to it.

2. See Micheline Tison-Braun's "L'évolution de quelques images-mères chez Péguy" (Revue littéraire de la France, January-February 1974, pp. 56-68). She considers childhood images like school, home, work and others like 'la nuit' and 'l'argent'.

Force est donc bien d'admettre qu'il y a une synthèse pour ainsi dire qualitative, une organisation graduelle de nos sensations successives les unes avec les autres, une unité analogue à celle d'une phrase mélodique (L'Essai, p. 74).

Emmanuel Mounier also noticed Péguy's penchant for musical rhythm and for incantation, but commented that it was "une disposition d'autant plus curieuse que Péguy était sourd à la musique ..." (Op. cit., p. 16, n. 2).

Péguy's use of many words to elucidate a single sensation - the "piétinement routinier" - could be seen as resembling the imprisonment of the discursive intellect searching in ever-increasing circles for a flash of illumination from outside itself; while the use of a single recurring word is the intuition grasped in a memorable lapidary formula. An example of this occurs in Eve, where Péguy, laboriously analyzing the relations between nature and the supernatural, finally alights upon a conclusion which lights up the whole:

Et l'un ne périra que l'autre aussi ne meure.
Et l'un ne survivra que l'autre aussi ne vive.
Et l'un ne restera que l'autre ne demeure
(Oeuvres poétiques, p. 1042).

The continual earthing of these two ideas in imagery from nature leads Péguy to the central theme - that Jesus, the incarnation, the divine word, was himself physical, a real man, and thus brings together in himself nature and supernature. Jesus becomes the supreme image:

Et Jésus est le fruit d'un ventre maternel,
Fructus ventris tui, le jeune nourrisson
s'endormit dans la paille et la balle et le son,
ses deux genoux pliés sous son ventre charnel
(p. 1043).

Once the central intuition has been envisaged, then all its inspirational power is tapped to extract new meanings and connotations from it. In this example, Péguy's physical description of the incarnate baby lasts fourteen

verses before he then uncovers or discovers another inner significance of the subject:

Le réseau qui tremblait sous la lèvre lactée
Battait comme les noeuds d'une souple dentelle.
Car la vie éternelle et la sacramentelle
n'est point une entreprise aride et contractée
(p. 1044).

In the rhythms of Péguy's poetry and prose there may be varying tempo but there is always a progression - a progression both of images and of ideas - as the inexorable march forward clears a pathway through the jungle of words and thoughts to a new breakthrough. There is a progression from the abstract to the concrete, from the general to the specific, from the vague to the pointed and the movement to enlightenment follows the pattern of its own rhythm; sometimes marking time, sometimes shifting only slightly in emphasis, sometimes breaking through into a new realization.

The rhythms and movement are also evident in Péguy's 'prose' passages, such as this one from L'Argent Suite, which again deals with the subject of incarnation:

Et jamais l'argent n'a été à ce point le seul maître et
le Dieu. Et jamais le riche n'a été aussi couvert contre
le pauvre et le pauvre aussi découvert contre le riche ...
Et jamais le temporel n'a été aussi couvert contre le
spirituel, et jamais le spirituel n'a été aussi découvert
contre le temporel (Oeuvres III, p. 1265).

This time a sense of movement is summoned both by the refrain 'jamais ...' and by the use of repeated words and similar phrases. When Péguy comes to the point of definitive statement, the writing suddenly loses its rhythm and the thought suddenly becomes both abstract and yet fixed at the same time:

C'est le mystère même du charnel et du temporel, mon
jeune camarade, et de l'insertion du spirituel dans
le charnel, et de l'insertion de l'éternel dans le
temporel, et pour tout dire c'est le mystère même de
l'incarnation (Id., p. 1269).

Péguy's ramblings in a realistic way imitate and follow the sinuosities of real thought - in short, he 'materializes' in words and phrases the stream of consciousness. And yet, as A. Valensin points out, there is always movement towards incarnation - towards clearer definition:

... il y a la parole intérieure, celle de la pensée qui se cherche elle-même en même temps que son expression, et cette parole-là tâtonne avec des mots; elle a des reprises, des hésitations. Elle ne va pas au bout des phrases, elle se comprend à demi-mot, ne s'inquiète pas de choisir, mais accueille toutes les expressions qui lui viennent, quitte à les faire suivre d'autres expressions qui corrigent ou annulent les premières (Regards II, Aubier-Montaigne, 1955, pp. 168-169).

Péguy's thought is a straining, a reaching-out towards understanding. It is like the physical grasping of an object. For this reason, André Gide's concrete image for Péguy's thought - that of pebbles - is an excellent comparison:

Le style de Péguy est semblable aux cailloux du désert qui se suivent et se ressemblent, où chacun est pareil à l'autre, mais un tout petit peu différent; d'une différence qui se reprend, se ressaisit, se répète, semble se répéter, s'accentue, s'affirme, et toujours plus nettement; on avance! ... (Nouveaux Prétextes, Mercure de France, 1951, p. 212).

The conventional, social meanings of words must be effaced to some extent, so that words can take on new significance - become more personal, more flexible, moulded to the author's intention. Chabancn considers this process to be a "métamorphose miraculeuse que nous découvrons à toutes les pages de Péguy. Les termes les plus prosaïques, les plus vulgaires sont poétisés par lui" (La Poétique de Péguy, p. 189). One can think of the word 'poteau' in Note conjointe ..., which changes its meaning or significance from 'post' to 'landmark' to 'pointer' and finally takes on such importance that it renders to the mind the image of the pillar of fire leading the Jews across the desert in Exodus and it becomes a magisterial symbol of the whole difference between Catholicism, with its signposted way,

and Protestantism, with its stress on individual conscience.

An image is not an exact clothing for a single idea or representation; it is the tool for new discoveries, new insights, new creation. The word becomes the conductor for new powers of evocation and association:

L'inspiration a pour effet de transfigurer le réel.
Son rayonnement donne, aux plus pauvres choses, une
merveilleuse grandeur (Incarnation, Jean Onimus, p. 87).

The deepening of awareness and sensitivity before the infinite mystery and variety of life are assisted by Péguy's use of language. One should not stop at the literal meanings of words, nor even at their connotations.

The probing of life cannot cease, for there is no 'néant'; as Bergson demonstrated in L'Evolution Créatrice (pp. 728-746). A deeper examination of the world of the senses only leads on to a deeper awareness and understanding of the immaterial world beyond, which in turn leads to the infinity of God's being. It is in fact through the physical that the spiritual is grasped - and this is a primary belief for Péguy. The converse is equally valid: the spiritual, the immaterial, must in this life always imply the material, the earthly. The idea of incarnation works both ways: Christians are not working in an abstract place for an abstract ideal. Rather:

Cette boue et ce sable,
C'est là leurs pieds d'argile et leur pauvre couronne
(Oeuvres Poétiques, p. 1041, "Eve").

Le surnaturel est lui-même charnel
Et l'arbre de la grâce est raciné profond
Et plonge dans le sol et cherche jusqu'au fond ...
(Ibid.)

This two-way communion and rapport is Péguy's major obsession, and this can also be seen on the level of style in terms of the tension between thought and language. An abstract idea is almost always immediately spelt out in concrete terms in Péguy's imagery:

Les armes de Jésus c'est le sang de sa (peuple de Dieu) veine
Et le sang de son coeur, les sanglots de sa peine
Et l'immense sanglot de toute race humaine ...
(Oeuvres poétiques, p. 856, "La tapisserie de sainte Geneviève").

The abstract idea is made even more homespun and down-to-earth further on:

Les armes de Jésus, c'est le bon voisinage
Entre les pauvres gens, c'est le pauvre village
Et l'Eglise au milieu, c'est le campagnonnage
(p. 868).

The very word 'tapisserie' in the titles of two poems is itself a material image of the abstract idea of life, in just the same way as is 'la mer' (Oeuvres poétiques, p. 494 et al.).

Péguy's concept of incarnation has a good deal in common with Bergson's writing in L'Evolution Créatrice. Both writers presuppose a radical dualism in creation: Bergson between 'l'élan vital' (the spiritual principle) and matter; Péguy between the spiritual and the temporal. The latter term is taken to mean anything dying or dead, anything fixed, anything routine, conventionalized or fossilized. Some ideas and theories are habitual forms of thought with no life in them, no power to convict or to elevate. Some words are like dead obstacles to communication, reduced to habitual meaning, conventional categories with very little impact. Péguy's idea is to 'spiritualize' language and thought; that is, to infuse it with life and power. Words and thoughts should then be active principles, capable of arousing emotion, new insight and of stimulating action.

The similarity between Bergson's ideas and Péguy's is envisaged by Jean Onimus in Incarnation:

Avec Bergson, Péguy reconnaît dans les pensées abstraites, les formules, les mots, ces déchets qui retombent autour de la fusée de vie, pareils aux habitudes mortes - et finalement de la même venue que la matière brute (p. 68).

The word 'matter' is not to be taken in Péguy simply to mean anything

devoid of life, as in Bergson. However, the materialist philosophy, according to Péguy, does end by limiting life and placing man in bondage. A single-minded concentration on the material side of life produces a man who has no memory - who ignores his country's heritage and fails to see the significance of history - a man who is in bondage to his immediate past and to the demands of the present - acting from expediency alone - a man who reduces the value of life to the value of money. This attitude reduces the variety of creation to uniformity, while spiritual and moral values are reduced to pragmatic ones pertaining to economic gain and self-interest. In short, everything detracting from the plenitude and heterogeneity of life inevitably leads to 'la politique' and thence to death.

It is not only the materialist philosophy which is condemned by Péguy. There is also a 'politique' of the spirit. A concentration on the abstract or 'spiritual' at the expense of the material side of creation is equally misguided:

... la grande erreur des doctrines spiritualistes a été de croire qu'en isolant la vie spirituelle de tout le reste, en la suspendant dans l'espace aussi haut que possible au-dessus de la terre, elles la mettaient à l'abri de toute atteinte, comme si elles ne l'exposaient pas simplement ainsi à être prise pour un effet de mirage (Quoted from Péguy s.l.n.d. in Incarnation, Jean Onimus, p. 213).

For this reason Péguy always 'earths' his poetry and prose in the concrete and the natural creation: "Au fade idéalisme il fallait s'opposer, fût-ce brutalement, la familiarité d'une présence charnelle ..." (Onimus, Introduction aux trois Mystères, p. 39). Thus Péguy gives the reader not simply 'l'âme' but 'le jardin de l'âme' (various) and uses, in Le Porche de la deuxième vertu, images of 'la terre' which render it even more 'earthy' and solid, such as 'la boue', 'la poussière' and 'la cendre'. In the same poem, the idea of hope is 'earthed' in images of new growth:

Comme on voit, comme on sent la sève au mois de mai
Poindre sous la dure écorce,
Ainsi on sent, ainsi on voit au mois de Pâques
Un sang nouveau monter et poindre
Sous la dure écorce du coeur,
Sous l'écorce de la colère, sous l'écorce du désespoir,
Sous la dure écorce du péché ...
(Oeuvres poétiques, p. 585).

Péguy makes it abundantly clear in passages like this that it is the material which can give rise to and display aspects of the spiritual. The whole created world of matter becomes, through Péguy's use of language, an image or reflection of supernatural values and attributes. One of his methods for achieving this realization is to juxtapose abstract and concrete nouns in startling and seemingly incongruous ways: for instance, "Rien n'est grand comme l'ordre / et rien n'est profond comme le labour" (Oeuvres poétiques, p. 634). Mary is 'infiniment céleste' not in spite of her carnal nature, but because of it: "Car, étant charnelle, elle est pure. Mais, étant pure, elle est aussi charnelle" (p. 566).

The physical does not take anything away from the divine or the supernatural, but adds something to it. In this way the created Universe becomes part of God's domain instead of something separate from it. So the angels lack something in failing to comprehend incarnation:

[les anges] ne savent point ce que c'est
que d'avoir un corps, que d'être un corps
... Ils ne connaissent point cette liaison
mystérieuse, cette liaison créée ... de l'âme et du corps
(p. 577).

In Péguy's writing there is then a dialectical movement between spirit and matter, concept and image, abstract and concrete: "Tous les développements de la phrase poétique consistent à donner des équivalences sensibles à des idées" (Chabanon, Op. cit., p. 194).

This fact has two main consequences. First, the whole of life is reunited in Péguy's writings - but never fused: "La vie est l'union de

l'âme et du corps" (Oeuvres poétiques, p. 726). Life is not just logic, nor is it just empirical data - it is both and more. In Péguy's writings all kinds of languages intersect and jostle one another; Sorbonnard theology mingles with peasant speech, medieval scholasticism with journalese, archaisms with neologisms, intellectual formulae with dialect and slang.

Secondly, the movement from spirit to matter or from matter to spirit illuminates both and the one gives the other its true meaning. Mere words take on the radiance of what they point to:

Leur signification ordinaire, sociale, intellectuelle ou empirique, doit s'effacer devant une nouvelle signification plus vague, plus sentimentale, plus intime. Métamorphose miraculeuse que nous découvrons à toutes les pages de Péguy. Les termes les plus prosaïques, les plus vulgaires sont poétisés par lui (Chabanon, p. 189).

The merely physical is enhanced by the presence of mysterious spiritual significance and, conversely, the merely intellectual is given new weight and relevance through having a real-life embodiment. The words Péguy uses are intended to be conductors of the full mystery of life and signs or pointers to its source. Words are transmuted into living realities: "Jésus-Christ, mon enfant, ne nous a point donné des conserves de paroles à garder, / mais il nous a donné des paroles vivantes / pour nourrir" (Oeuvres poétiques, p. 588).

Péguy uses images which are 'voisines de l'intuition'¹: "Toute vie vient de ce tendre, de ce fin bourgeon d'avril, de cette sève qui pleure en mai ..." (Oeuvres poétiques, p. 677, "Mystère des saints innocents"). Another example gives new insight into the nature of man's relationship with God: "Celui qui est dans ma main comme le bâton dans la main du voyageur

1. Term used by E. Bréhier in "Images bergsoniennes" (Etudes bergsoniennes II, P.U.F., 1949, p. 126).

Celui-là m'est agréable, dit Dieu" (p. 685). In the same poem, faith is compared to 'la lampe du sanctuaire', love to 'ce grand beau feu de bois' and hope to 'la fleur et le fruit et la feuille et la branche ...' (p. 746). Grace is "cette éternelle nouveauté qu'il y a dans l'enfance ... cette renaissante, cette perpétuellement renaissante, cette éternellement renaissante nouveauté" (p. 808).

Péguy's attempt to recreate through words a personal, living vision of the real world puts into practice Bergson's own views about the function of artists in society:

Au fur et à mesure qu'ils nous parlent, des nuances d'émotion et de pensée nous apparaissent qui pouvaient être représentées en nous depuis longtemps, mais qui demeuraient invisibles ... Le poète est ce révélateur (P.M., pp. 1370-1371).

Art for Péguy is a transmission of experience and an awakening of awareness, an appeal to observe everything as for the first time, all things in their original freshness and spontaneity, and through their changes and metamorphoses. What Bergson said of Corot and Turner, the artists, is equally true of Péguy, the writer, and it is this immediate awareness of things that Péguy aimed at conveying:

Approfondissons ce que nous éprouvons devant un Turner ou un Corot: nous trouverons que, si nous les acceptons et les admirons, c'est que nous avons déjà perçu quelque chose de ce qu'ils nous montrent. Mais nous avons perçu sans apercevoir. C'était, pour nous, une vision brillante et évanouissante, perdue dans la foule de ces visions également brillantes, également évanouissantes, qui se recouvrent dans notre expérience usuelle (Id., p. 1371).

This vision applies as much to intellectual insight as to observation in the material world. The overall importance of Bergson's philosophy for Péguy consists in this, that his apprehension of the totality of things - every realm of experience - is marked by immediate observation and not by dependence on past ideas or systems. This gives force to Péguy's contention

in Note Conjointe ... that great philosophies do not disprove and contradict one another (II, p. 1362); they each add something novel to our understanding and appreciation of life, reflecting insights peculiar to their time. Thus, a true revolution is not one which rejects all the past: "ce n'est pas la contrariété ... c'est de la nouveauté, la totale nouveauté de l'instant qui est venue à l'instant qui l'avait imprudemment précédé ... Du nouveau réel" (Par ce demi-clair matin, pp. 14-15).

Thus Péguy's final word on Bergson is this:

Le bergsonisme a été dans son principe un effort pour conduire la raison à l'étreinte de la réalité ...
Le bergsonisme n'a jamais été ni un irrationalisme ni un antirationalisme. Il a été un nouveau rationalisme (II, Note sur M. Bergson, p. 1341).

And Bergson's final word on Péguy is equally perspicacious:

Beaucoup m'ont fait l'honneur d'écrire sur moi - personne en dehors des éloges immérités qu'il m'a décernés, ne l'a fait comme Péguy. Il avait un don merveilleux pour franchir la matérialité des êtres, la dépasser et pénétrer jusqu'à leur âme. C'est ainsi qu'il a connu ma pensée essentielle telle que je voudrais l'exprimer (Europe, 15.4.1938, p. 488).

CHAPTER TEN

BERGSON AND DU BOS: LITERARY CRITICISM

Du Bos attributed to Bergson first and foremost his discovery of his own true self, a true liberation after seventeen years' bondage under the régime of 'le non-moi'; that is to say, under the prevailing influence of scientific materialism: "Je suis né à dix-sept ans" (Cahiers Charles Du Bos I, Corrêa, 1956, p. 22), he exclaimed and went on:

Ma vraie naissance n'eut lieu qu'en cette fin d'octobre 1899 où je rencontrai Joseph Baruzi, nouai avec lui la première de mes amitiés véritables et où aussitôt il me fit lire l'Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience d'Henri Bergson. C'est à mon intimité avec Joseph Baruzi et à la lecture de Bergson qu'à la lettre je dois la naissance de ce qui en moi est moi ... (Id.).

Du Bos spent the remainder of his life delving ever more deeply into himself as a means, not only of unravelling the mystery of the human personality, but also of understanding life in general.

It was also in 1899 that Du Bos first read Bergson's "Introduction à la Métaphysique", and the influence of these two works together remained preeminent for the rest of his life. In his correspondence with Baruzi at the turn of the century, Du Bos's speculations on the nature of energy bear out his new interest in philosophy and demonstrate his close affinity - avant la lettre - with Bergson's world picture in L'Evolution Créatrice of 1907:

Il n'y a pas deux substances: il y a les éternelles modifications d'une même puissance cosmique. Rien n'est en dehors de lui; tout est en lui (Cahiers CDB V, p. 22).

C. Dédéyan relates the story of Du Bos's and Baruzi's attempt to produce a philosophical interpretation of the History of Art in Volume I

of Le Cosmopolitisme littéraire de Charles Du Bos¹. This reveals two facts: first, Du Bos's early interest in philosophy - an interest which waned when he discovered that Bergson's philosophy was not typical of philosophy in general² - and, secondly, Du Bos's capacity for generalizations - a paradoxical persistence in him of the positivist love for systems and schemas. Du Bos and Baruzi intended to synthesize all the arts into a general category of manifestations of the scientific principle of individual creative energy: "faire prévaloir l'Esprit Individuel sur l'Esprit de la Nature, opposer le Moi au Monde, assurer par une lutte générale le triomphe du Moi" (Cahiers CDB V, p. 29). A. Bertocci's claim that, after reading Bergson, Du Bos was delivered from "Nietzschean naturalism and the chains of determinism"³ is not really substantiated by the evidence of the time. Du Bos only realized the full impact of Bergson's teaching on him over a long period of time. It is true to say also that, although Du Bos became interested in the particular individual at this time, he never lost his penchant for generalizing and categorizing - as will be seen. That Du Bos found Bergson's thought a continuing source of inspiration and new insights is evidenced by the fact that he re-read and returned to the works throughout his life.

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1. Société d'Édition d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1965, pp. 18-84.
 2. See Cahiers CDB X, p. 41: "Bergson me dit que c'est parmi les philosophes de profession ... que ses idées philosophiques rencontrent le plus d'opposition. 'C'est que pour la plupart d'entre eux, lui dis-je, la philosophie est quelque chose de tout à fait séparée de la vie, un jeu, le jeu des concepts, un puzzle intellectuel'". For two and a half years after 1899 he had considered his vocation to be in philosophy and wrote on 20th October 1930 (Journal VI, p. 88): "Il me fallut des années pour m'en rendre tout à fait compte que j'entraîs en Bergson bien plutôt que je n'entraî en philosophie".
 3. In Modern French Criticism (ed. J. Simon, University of Chicago Press, 1972); Chapter: "Du Bos and the critique of genius".

In the Journal of 17th June 1910 (Extraits, Ed. de la Pléiade, 1928, pp. 15-16) Du Bos realizes definitively that Bergson is the opponent of intellectual abstraction and the champion of the introspective method:

... parfois dans des oeuvres qui passent pour grandes, l'intelligence n'a fonctionné que tout au début, au moment de la conception ... un certain nombre de cadres ... seront remplis par la volonté. Des esprits que l'on pourrait appeler des encadreurs: Y. et presque tous les critiques contemporains; à l'exception de Bergson, la plupart des philosophes contemporains, me paraissent, eux aussi, dans ce cas: ils tracent autour de leur sujet, avec un soin minutieux, une ligne comparable à celles qui séparent les pays sur les cartes de géographie, et une fois qu'ils ont marqué, repéré les délimitations, ils se gardent bien de s'aventurer à l'intérieur (*italics in original*) 1

This passage is particularly in praise of Bergson's method, which is direct and penetrating, rather than superficial and speciously logical. The technique gives rise to the ideas:

Le mouvement véritable, quel qu'il soit, ne s'obtient jamais qu'en se mettant soi-même à l'intérieur du mobile; et c'est pourquoi, quand il est véritable, lui aussi, l'écrivain suit le pas de sa propre pensée au lieu de prétendre à la régler du dehors (Ibid., p. 17).

Du Bos actually met Bergson on 29th November 1910, as is recorded in the Journal of 29.11.10 (Cahiers CDB X) and a discussion on imagery ensued. This discussion once again highlighted the distinction between the external organization of general ideas as opposed to the deepening of one's insight into the nature of something specific. The great advantage of the image, according to Bergson, is to:

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1. Du Bos's opposition to conventional philosophy later hardened. He considered the typical philosopher to be like Comte or Taine, abstract and rigid: "le général et l'homme en général avait tant fourni à l'esprit français qu'ils n'avaient plus rien à lui apporter que redites, automatisme et mécanisation. Il fallait briser cette statue animée à la Condillac, et par-dessous la notion du général appliquée à l'homme; partir à la chasse et de l'individuel pur, et de l'irrationnel et de l'inconscient. Travail que chez nous, avant et par-dessus tout un Bergson, puis un Gide et un Proust ont accompli" (Journal III, pp. 11-12).

rendre d'une pensée ce qu'elle a de spécifique, au lieu que le mot abstrait traduit plutôt la vie de relations de la pensée, ses rapports avec d'autres pensées, la place qu'elle occupe dans le monde des concepts. Il faut ... multiplier les images afin de rétrécir grâce à leur diversité le cercle qui nous sépare de l'idée elle-même (Ibid., p. 40).

The two ideas here which made a profound impression on Du Bos, and which recur in his later writings, are, first, that the image is the ideal vehicle to convey reality, and, secondly, that the mind has a natural and unfortunate tendency to relate one idea to others rather than to concentrate on the unique or original in anything.

The next step for Du Bos was to move from concentration on particular phenomena to an even narrower concentration of the self and the inner self. This became the prism through which all of life's experiences had to pass in order for them to be analyzed and interpreted with meticulous care:

Toute l'action de Bergson sur moi s'est exercée par son génie introspectif, psychologique, d'observation intérieure (Journal VI, 21.4.30, p. 32).

Introspection forms the basis of Du Bos's literary method. His discovery of and meditation upon Bergsonism led him to his vocation. In particular, it was Bergson's aptitude for close psychological analysis that Du Bos admired so much:

La psychologie d'un Bergson est fonction constante de la profondeur de sa spiritualité: et toutes deux (profondeur et spiritualité) lui sont à ce point innées que jamais à ses yeux elles ne prennent rien de mystérieux: c'est en toute sincérité qu'il répugne à l'idée de mystère et répudie toute application qu'on en voudrait faire à sa doctrine ... (Journal I, p. 66, 22.2.22).

However, it must be said that Bergson was always interested in the general phenomena of life such as time, sense perception and memory; but Du Bos's interest is in 'le plan humain' (Journal VI, p. 56, 10.6.30), taking himself as an absolutely typical example. That is why Du Bos is

inspired to make extensive researches and 'sondages' into his own feelings, moods, thoughts, intuitions and 'sensations', on the assumption that "tout dire de soi équivaudrait à dire beaucoup, sinon tout, des autres" (Anna de Noailles, p. 80). On the other hand, Du Bos is also interested in the untypical man - the individualist like Benjamin Constant or André Gide, or the genius, like Tolstoy or Shelley. The last two live less on the 'plan humain' than on 'le plan spirituel' in the sense that their work is an expression of their spirit and the aspirations of the soul. Du Bos therefore developed a two-fold interest: first, in the human personality and its permutations; secondly, in the realm of the 'spiritual', a realm in which he became increasingly interested.

Du Bos's first full-length discussion of Bergson occurs in the Journal of 22nd June 1914 (Extraits, pp. 63-65), when Bergson's method of writing is compared with the painting technique of Corot:

Tous deux, pleins à la fois de respect et de précaution, épousent leur matière, loin de la contraindre ou de la tordre en quoi que ce soit ... (p. 63).

Du Bos always excelled in comparing people working in different genres¹. The range and flexibility of his method induces him to concentrate on the person over and against the particular subject-matter, which, for him, is incidental. It is as men and not as artists that Corot and Bergson can be compared. This point becomes clear in a comment Du Bos made after embarking upon a re-reading of Bergson's entire works in September 1917:

Je voudrais prendre deux séries de notes bien distinctes: les unes consisteraient dans un extrait des vérités capitales contenues dans l'ouvrage, les autres monteraient le

1. One of the earliest references to Bergson compares the ideas of L'Essai with Elizabeth Barrett Browning's ideas in Sonnets from the Portuguese (see Cahiers CDB X).

long des pensées exprimées jusqu'à la personnalité unique qui en est la source (Extraits, p. 86).

Du Bos's method, by which he attempted to seize in a simple intuition the nature of the man behind the writings - a method he owed indirectly to Bergson - was even turned back on Bergson himself:

... il est très rare qu'une vérité m'apparaisse comme distincte de celui qui l'a créée, et se suffisait à elle-même ... le rapport entre la pensée exprimée et le génie qui tient derrière elle devient à mes yeux comme un rapport d'identité; et plus la pensée est puissante, plus elle me rejette et me replonge dans l'esprit qui lui a donné naissance (Id.).

This idea can be traced back to Bergson's L'Essai:

C'est donc une psychologie grossière, dupe du langage, que celle qui nous montre l'âme déterminée par une sympathie, une aversion ou une haine, comme par autant de forces qui pèsent sur elle. Ces sentiments, pourvu qu'ils aient atteint une profondeur suffisante, représentent chacun l'âme entière, en ce sens que tout le contenu de l'âme se reflète en chacun d'eux (L'Essai, p. 109).

This interest in the writer would also explain why Du Bos recorded in great detail his impressions on meeting Bergson face to face (22nd February 1918) in the rue Vital:

Il est, non pas du tout inhumain, mais pour ainsi dire ahumain: petit magicien secret, furtif, qui dévide devant vous comme afin de pouvoir se retirer bien vite ... impossibilité de rencontrer son regard; ce regard entièrement tourné en dedans vous demeure pour ainsi dire parallèle (Journal I, p. 62).

Du Bos was struck with the fact that Bergson appeared incapable of true dialogue: "Bergson pense tout haut devant vous, approuve votre répartie, puis reprend le fil de sa pensée sans qu'il y ait jamais à proprement parler échange" (Id.).

The emotional effect of Bergson's writings on Du Bos is also worth noting in detail. After examining L'Essai on 14th February 1922 he said

that "les dernières pages [of 2nd chapter] sur les deux moi m'avaient versé un bonheur, presque une allégresse particulière" (Journal I, p. 54).

Again on this matter, Du Bos's reaction confirms Bergson's comments on the subject, for life always warns us:

par un signe précis que notre destination est atteinte.
Ce signe est la joie ... la joie annonce toujours que
la vie a réussi, qu'elle a gagné du terrain, qu'elle a
remporté une victoire ... (L'Energie Spirituelle, p. 832).

Du Bos is Bergsonian in temperament as well as in ideology.

In 1922 Du Bos intended to prepare some lectures on Bergson, scheduled for 22nd February at the home of a Mme. Chandler. He also mentions "l'étude que j'ai l'intention de lui consacrer" (Journal I, p. 56) intended for the Approximations volume. But the intention of finishing a work on Bergson was never actually realized. On 27th July 1922 Du Bos was still hoping to submit an article to Le Grix or J. Rivière - "ceci très important" (Journal I, p. 51). Later still, this study on Bergson was to be called "Bergson et le style de la Vie Spirituelle" (Journal II, p. 261) and two days later Du Bos wrote to Bergson with the renewed intention of preparing a course on him. By June 1925 a course was planned on Bergson, Shelley, George, Hofmannsthal and Rosetti (p. 381), but somehow Bergson came to be overlooked in favour of other writers. By 13th April Du Bos was intending to write an 'hommage' to Bergson for the publishers 'Morhanges' (p. 344). This was never realized either, even though by 1930 Du Bos saw the situation as urgent. His considerations were then prompted by a sense of gratitude and debt, by the fact that Bergson had expressed an interest in Extraits (published 1929) and also by the fact that Bergson's health was rapidly faltering.

The event of crucial significance with regard to this matter was Du Bos's conversion of July 1927 to catholicism, which made his attitude to Bergsonism

equivocal. From October 1927 Du Bos had become increasingly friendly with Jacques Maritain, Bergson's chief opponent in the Catholic church. The tension between Bergsonism and Catholicism in Du Bos's own mind was intensified after the new edition of La Philosophie bergsonienne, which Du Bos received from the author on 11th May 1929. Du Bos was at this time also preoccupied with Thomas Aquinas¹. At first he saw no real opposition between Bergsonism and neo-Thomism. Neo-Thomism was conceived as complementary to Bergson's work:

Ce que j'ai fait 30 ans pour Bergson, je sais bien commencer à le faire pour S. Thomas d'Aquin. Il ne s'agit en rien de renier Bergson: moi-même, ne lui écrivais-je pas le 12 mars en lui transcrivant mon fragment de Journal de 1927 qu'il m'avait conduit jusqu'au seuil ... mais ce seuil, c'est sans lui que j'eus à le franchir, et maintenant qu'il est franchi ne puis-je penser que S. Augustin à son tour me confie aux soins de S. Thomas d'Aquin qui le vénérât ...? (Journal V, p. 116, 11.5.29).

Du Bos thought that Bergson and St. Thomas were working in different areas of life and thought and their findings were therefore not incompatible. However, Du Bos did eventually take Maritain to task for his rejection of the psychological method in his epistemology: "J'avoue ne pas voir à ce jour la part dévolue par la pensée de Jacques à l'observation intérieure ... (p. 122, 14.5.29). Du Bos went on to insist that "cette observation intérieure est un instrument qui nous conduit, ou tout au moins nous oriente sans cesse dans la direction de la vérité" (pp. 122-123). So, as far as possible Du Bos remained loyal to Bergson, but, on the other hand, retained a fraternal affection for Maritain's thought², except on this matter where the two conflicted. The fact that Du Bos did contradict Bergson on one or

1. See Journal V of 13.5.29.

2. See Journal IV, p. 40.

two points of doctrine can be detected in such a comment as this:

Le tort fondamental de Bergson ... c'est d'avoir débarqué explicitement la notion de l'être, de l'avoir débarqué implicitement ou du moins de ne s'être jamais exprimé clairement à son sujet ... (p. 129, 14.5.29).

Du Bos acknowledged a debt to Maritain on this point and added: "Je lui sais plus grand gré encore de me marquer à moi-même le point précis où je quitte Bergson pour me joindre à lui" (Id.).

Du Bos in fact tried to make a distinction between 'la spiritualité naturelle' and 'la spiritualité chrétienne', attributing to Bergson expertise in the former realm, while Maritain was the authority in the latter:

Sans doute l'abbé X. ... a mille fois raison de dire qu'au psychologique doit être superposé un théologique qui absolument le transcende; mais l'observation intérieure est à la fois une faculté et un fait ... (pp. 122-123, 14.5.29).

Du Bos asked Maritain if the church had a doctrine of 'la spiritualité naturelle' and found that there was such a notion, but that 'la spiritualité naturelle' was insufficient of itself to know God. Du Bos accordingly assigned a humbler role to Bergson's discoveries:

Ce que la spiritualité naturelle commande et oriente, c'est la démarche vitale: au lieu de l'oeuvre de l'artiste, c'est l'acte vital que fait naître chez moi l'intervention du spirituel (p. 167, 29.7.29).

Du Bos also placed all non-Christian spirituality in this category of 'la spiritualité naturelle'; that of Chekhov, Nietzsche and the early Shelley.

The ideal master for Du Bos was, however, not Maritain with his technical methods but St. Augustine, the lover of introspection. He had studied him as early as 1912-1913 (see Extraits) and said in 1930:

Depuis 30 ans tous les mouvements de ma pensée, ses besoins et ses conclusions, ses intuitions et ses prises de conscience, ont été spontanément, et sans que je m'en doutasse le moins du monde, des mouvements augustinien (Journal VI, p. 48).

In Augustine he recognized his own searching, his method - the combination of emotional and intellectual probing - and his need to experience the divine in a real way through the senses as an 'onction spirituelle' (pp. 50-51) and as 'une donnée immédiate' (pp. 176-177). Du Bos's remarkable precision in dating his religious experiences demonstrates clearly that he lived the Christian life as an experience:

Chez moi, la naissance de la charité ... coïncida avec la première accession aux prémises de la contemplation le soir du 7 juin - vigile de la Pentecote, 1930; la deuxième, toute tributaire du mois d'août 1932 à Chartres - celle qui se poursuit aujourd'hui - commença pour moi ici-même le soir du samedi 15 septembre, 1934 (Journal IX, p. 83, 18.9.35).

This is in marked contrast to Du Bos's habitual vagueness about dates generally. His secretary, Madge (Mme. J. Mouton), was always responsible herself for the dating and timing of every Journal - Du Bos was incapable of remembering¹.

Thus, in later life, Du Bos's beloved mentor, Bergson, gives way, not, as Maritain hoped, to Thomas Aquinas, but to Augustine, the man best fitted to extend and elaborate upon Bergson's findings. After reading Bergson's views on body and soul in Le Matérialisme contemporain by Paul Janet, Du Bos drew a comparison between him and Augustine, making clear his own relationship with both:

J'avais été très frappé ... de la manière dont cette conférence vous conduit au seuil du temple de la survie et de la religion. ... Bergson, lui-même si scrupuleux, si honnête, si désireux de ne rien avancer où il ne sente toute sa pensée derrière lui pour étayer et soutenir sa démarche, n'ira pas plus loin ... mais peut-être son point d'arrêt lui-même marquera-t-il mieux que rien ne l'avait fait auparavant, où commence le domaine de la foi. Il s'agit de saisir le fil qu'il nous a tendu et de ne plus lâcher qu'il ne nous ait conduit à cet observatoire. Une fois là, nous sommes face à face avec le nuage lumineux et c'est là que S. Augustin devient le compagnon; c'est là, Bergson nous

1. Revealed to me by letter.

ayant généreusement épargné le travail de la route, c'est là que l'effort personnel de dilation s'impose (Cahiers CDB XVI, pp. 26-27, 10.9.17).

This work of 'dilatation' - the widening of one's experiences and horizons - took Du Bos beyond the common experiences of all men and into a realm where the positive, experimental method could not yield certain results. In short, Du Bos then went beyond the scope of Bergson's philosophy and into the realm of faith. But Bergson's findings in the world of everyday experience always held firm for Du Bos and were not belied by later beliefs. Bergson is still "l'homme qui a réfuté toute doctrine tendant à voir dans la pensée une simple fonction du cerveau. C'est le spiritualisme bergsonien ... qui dès l'origine m'orienta" (Journal III, p. 154, 29.1.27).

Now, if Bergson were largely responsible for Du Bos's spiritual awakening, it would be wise to define exactly what Du Bos meant by 'le spirituel' and see how it relates to Bergson's own interpretation.

In Matière et Mémoire Bergson in fact separated the mind and the body in terms of their nature - they not only have different functions but are part of different realities. The dividing point lies between perception and memory - "entre cette perception de la matière et la matière même il n'y a qu'une différence de degré, et non de nature, la perception pure étant à la matière dans le rapport de la partie au tout ..." (Matière et Mémoire, p. 218) - whereas, on the other hand, "la mémoire pure, en nous ouvrant une perspective sur ce qu'on appelle l'esprit, devra de son côté départager ces deux doctrines, matérialisme et spiritualisme" (p. 218). If for the materialist all is matter, and for the idealist all is spirit or idea, a synthesis of both is desirable. Materialism can be refuted if it is upheld in its own domain but no further:

La vérité est qu'il y aurait un moyen et un seul, de réfuter le matérialisme: ce serait d'établir que la matière est absolument comme elle paraît être. Par là

on éliminerait de la matière toute virtualité, toute puissance cachée, et les phénomènes de l'esprit auraient une réalité indépendante (p. 219).

Clearly, Bergson has placed a great deal in the realm of the spiritual. The life of the spirit is first and foremost in the mind and memory of man. It is this identification of spirit with mind and memory which interested Du Bos at an early stage. He supported Bergson in radically distinguishing spirit and matter:

Il n'est que trop clair que guérir est hors de question et qu'il s'agit au contraire de me maintenir au maximum de moi-même, fût-ce sur une absence de base physique (Journal II, p. 308).

Du Bos's attitude indicates that what he considers to be most himself has little to do with his bodily life. He reaches his true life through memories, thoughts and feelings more than through the examination of present perceptions. For this reason, the body and mind are not only distinct in fact, but also to some extent in terms of time. Du Bos concentrates heavily on the richness of memories. A true realization and expression of the self must take into account all of one's past states and judgements. If present events become too demanding in Du Bos's life, he feels that he has lost possession of his soul since he has lost an awareness of his past and therefore of his total self:

Toujours il s'agit de parer au jour le jour à la difficulté nouvelle, et, par suite, d'être envahi par la vie matérielle au degré de n'avoir pas littéralement le temps (sans même parler de liberté d'esprit) de faire face à rien d'autre (Journal II, p. 92).

Often it is from the unconscious self (where a large part of memory is lodged)¹ that, unexpectedly and unforeseen, new feelings and sensations emerge: "La vérité c'est qu'il y a en moi un jaillissement de forces vitales que

1. See Matière et Mémoire, p. 283 ff.

sans cesse je crois brisées, que quelqu'un en moi veut brisées, mais qui rééclatent ..." (Journal II, p. 92, italics in original). When Du Bos speaks in horror of the people who are totally occupied with the material life, he means above all that they have an obsession with things of the moment:

Je suis frappé de plus en plus de voir combien ... sont innombrables les gens qui se baignent complètement, tout en s'en plaignant toujours, dans la vie matérielle (p. 168).

Such people deny their real individuality because they live as if they have no past experiences of their own to guide their actions, no continuity of self, no character, no soul.

For this very reason, time for meditation and recollection becomes a necessity for Du Bos - a treasure to be cherished and guarded: "L'expérience n'est significative que dans les rares moments où, rendu au repos, il me serait loisible d'avoir des sensations" (Journal I, pp. 319-320). Leisure-time is a necessity not simply for the dilettante pleasure of analyzing one's own moods and feelings - it is not narcissistic - it is vital to encourage the creative process itself:

Produire, ce n'est pas penser, c'est avoir pensé, en sorte que l'acte par lequel la pensée se manifeste implique au moment même où il a lieu la cessation de cette pensée même qui lui donna naissance (Journal I, p. 20).

So the reality of the spiritual life in the memory is of the utmost importance to Du Bos; but, since so much of the memory and so many individual memories lie outside the control of the will in the subconscious mind, Du Bos takes time to relax his mind to present activity and attempts to allow the past to filter into consciousness¹. Du Bos considered that

1. C.f. Bergson's assertion that intelligence is focussed on present activity rather than on memories, which lead to distraction rather than action (E.C., p. 616 ff.).

the subconscious part of memory held many clues to the nature of the self:

Je ne connais plus la détresse qui me prenait si fort naguère, le sentiment des choses précieuses perdues. J'éprouve au contraire que si les choses ont l'air en effet d'être perdues, elles continuent à vivre en moi et se retrouvent (Extraits, p. 149, 28.4.22).

M.-A. Gouhier also stresses the connection between Bergson's idea of memory and Du Bos's concentration on past experiences: "Pour Du Bos le plus fécond instrument de la connaissance de soi est la mémoire" (Charles Du Bos, J. Vrin, 1951, p. 37). However, Mme. Gouhier does not dwell very much on the importance of the past and so misses the point that the past actually sheds light on present perceptions.

The role of memory in present attention is also vital to Du Bos: Bergson says this on the matter:

Notre mémoire dirige sur la perception reçue les anciennes images qui y ressemblent et dont nos mouvements ont déjà tracé l'esquisse. Elle crée ainsi à nouveau la perception présente, ou plutôt elle double cette perception en lui renvoyant soit sa propre image, soit quelque image-souvenir du même genre. Si l'image retenue ou remémorée n'arrive pas à couvrir tous les détails de l'image perçue, un appel est lancé aux régions plus profondes et plus éloignées de la mémoire, jusqu'à ce que d'autres détails connus viennent se projeter sur ceux qu'on ignore ... (M.M., p. 247).

Bergson goes so far as to say that "plus puissant est cet effort de concentration, plus profonde et plus complète l'intelligence" ("De l'Intelligence", Mélanges, p. 558). Attention and concentration thus contribute to bringing the whole personality to bear on a subject. The richness and depth of understanding would then be directly proportionate to the amount of attention granted to the perception. As Du Bos puts it, memory acts as "en nous l'appanage tout ensemble métaphysique et musical" (Approximations VI, Fayard, 1965, p. 141). Memory confers personal identity and provides a thread for the jewels of experience: "cette mémoire à laquelle Pater de Marius aboutit à accorder une place centrale, privilégiée, celle du sanctuaire du temple"

(Dialogue avec André Gide, Corrêa, 1929, p. 102).

An emphasis on attention and concentration does not therefore require an emptying of the mind of distractions. Rather, it involves calling up past memories to assist the understanding. It requires an openness to the reaction of the whole self so that it is not just a fixed or shallow reaction. This means that Du Bos's use of memory involves a rejection of what Bergson termed 'intelligence' - that is, the ability to decide quickly and decisively on a course of action, the ability to eliminate alternative possibilities. Du Bos's method is 'intuitive' in the Bergsonian sense because it involves preparation and consideration, attention and concentration, a weighing of all possibilities and eventualities. But, more than this, it is intuitive because it finally goes to the heart of the matter and comes to a positive recognition of the truth. Although apparently long and devious, it is in fact paradoxically direct:

I am always at the heart of things and situations; je brûle les étapes, je ne m'attarde à nul préliminaire. Ceci peut sembler contradictoire avec mes circonlocutions, mes parenthèses, mon mode indirect d'approcher des êtres; mais en réalité ne l'est en rien, car précisément c'est parce que je vais droit au coeur des situations qu'une fois que j'y suis j'use de ces précautions infinies: elles se produisent dans la zone brûlante bien plutôt qu'elles n'ont pour objet d'y arriver (Journal II, p. 309). (Du Bos did sometimes write in English in the Journal.)

If the first and main aim of Du Bos's method is to attain a vision of the truth about his subject through intuition, then the prerequisite for this is to subjugate the natural desire of the intelligence to jump to conclusions, make associations and prematurely form relationships.

Georges Poulet (in La Conscience Critique, José Corti, 1971) argues that "le poète est celui qui reçoit, disons mieux, qui subit" and concludes from this that "entre la pensée de Charles Du Bos et la pensée reçue par Charles Du Bos, il n'y a pas véritable réciprocité. L'une est toute active,

l'autre est toute passive" (p. 77). This needs clarification. The verb 'subir' does not denote a state of inactivity, but rather suggests that the mental and emotional activity involved is not of one's own making or creation. Du Bos's real approach is not just passive; it has more to do with living the life of the subject; seeing things from the other's point of view, thinking at his pace, vibrating in sympathy with his moods and sensing the sensations he has received. Spiritual interpretation is therefore "un acte total auquel contribuent toutes les ressources de l'intelligence, toutes les antennes de la sensibilité, la capacité de dilatation de l'âme" (Approximations, p. 582). It is probable that the thought that influenced Du Bos in this direction came from Bergson's "Introduction à la Métaphysique": "Seule la coïncidence avec la personne même me donnerait l'absolu" (p. 1394):

Nous appelons ici intuition la sympathie par laquelle on se transporte à l'intérieur d'un objet pour coïncider avec ce qu'il a d'unique et par conséquent d'inexprimable (Id.).

Du Bos also often expresses a desire to retain the freshness of an experience: "cette nausée of words, words ... my manie [sic] of not wanting not only to say twice the same thing, but almost - deepest of all follies - I would never, if I could, use twice the same word in my life ..." (Journal I, pp. 109-110). The reverse of spontaneity and freshness is dullness. Not only is banality of expression dull in itself; it is also unfaithful to perception:

En matière de paysage, la banalité dans l'expression saute immédiatement aux yeux de celui qui écrit, et aussitôt il est obligé en face d'elle de s'avouer qu'il n'a pas vu ni même vraiment regardé ... (Journal I, p.8).

Of course Bergson wrote of the unpredictability and novelty in creation. Life is "création continuelle, jaillissement ininterrompu de nouveauté"

(P.M., p. 1259). There are two sides to this constant renewal in creation: on the one hand, each experience is absolutely new and preceding experiences do not have the same quality - intermediate events have altered one's outlook and appreciation. On the other hand, the whole of one's past experiences intermingle with anything new, so that the difference is one of nuance:

La plupart des émotions sont grosses de mille sensations, sentiments ou idées qui les pénètrent; chacune d'elles est donc un état unique en son genre, indéfinissable ... Pourtant l'artiste vise à nous introduire dans cette émotion si riche, si personnelle, si nouvelle, et à nous faire éprouver ce qu'il ne saurait nous faire comprendre (L'Essai, p. 15).

One's own experiences are never the same as someone else's but can nonetheless have pointers or guidelines to the nature of those experiences.

The process of making an original and personal experience communal and objective presents obvious pitfalls: it is achieved through language which usually aims at the understanding and not at the emotions. It is with a twinge of regret that Du Bos acknowledges this fact:

Ajoutons que l'objectivation, la généralisation de l'événement intérieur est presque inévitable, puisque nous voyons un Nietzsche lui-même, non seulement n'y pas échapper, mais la vouloir et la clamer. Mais posséder à ce degré cette faculté de l'événement intérieur, c'est la chose la plus rare qui soit ... (Journal II, pp. 312-313, 25.2.25).

Du Bos's use of language and the development of his style are exercises in subtlety and nuance. His long, tortuous expressions are a precaution against oversimplification and overstatement. He sometimes states a bald fact and then spends a good length of time qualifying or explaining his comment. For example, he calls Gide "un spirituel qui trahit" (Journal IV, p. 71), but the word 'spirituel' here has a significance not easily or readily grasped and its significance becomes clear only after reading other writings of Du Bos. Similarly, he calls Tolstoy "le plus splendide animal humain"

(Approximations IV, p. 771), but again the words 'animal' and 'humain' are technical shorthand invented by Du Bos.

The most precise and simple linguistic clothing for an intuition is an image. Mme. Gouhier sees Du Bos's imagery as a form of incarnation: "De la pensée au langage comme de l'âme au corps, c'est la même expression sacramentale de l'esprit par la matière transsubstantiée" (Charles Du Bos, p. 164). This Catholic interpretation was the one Du Bos came round to eventually, as can be seen in Qu'est-ce que la littérature? (1945): past time can be recreated in eternity - "l'heure est morte en fait, et le sentiment qui a communiqué à l'heure sa signification peut-être mort lui aussi, mais si l'incarnation a eu lieu, si l'émotion a été faite chair dans les mots, alors l'heure morte est immortelle" (p. 92).

This religious interpretation is not, however, evident early in his career and his thought on imagery is largely determined by Bergson's observations. Du Bos discussed Bergson's own style in 1921 (Journal I, p. 59) and came to the conclusion that "il s'efforce de combler par l'image le maximum possible du vide qui subsiste entre l'expression première et l'intuition vers laquelle elle doit s'orienter". In other words, Bergson's style evinces a progression from the inaccurate and vague to the precise and clear-cut. Bergson himself views the material world as "l'ensemble des images" (Matière et Mémoire, p. 173). An image should retain the fluidity and fleeting nature of a living presence, while it also has enough form and shape to make a clear picture in the mind. An image has a power of connotation and suggestion, but at the same time it can be virtually seized and understood as something firm and stable. It moves between the

unformed 'spiritual' abstraction and the hard-and-fast 'material' expression¹.

The same 'va-et-vient' between the material (concrete) and spiritual (abstract) is evident in Du Bos's use of imagery. His idea of 'sondage' is attributed to Bergson's insight (see Journal I, pp. 257-258) and corresponds to Bergson's idea of 'auscultation spirituelle' (P.M., p. 1408). This is a means to 'sentir palpiter l'âme' - in short, to realize the movement of life. "Cet empirisme vrai," Bergson goes on, "est la vraie métaphysique" (Id.). The image, far from oversimplifying thought, actually combines the force of many ideas in a vivid picture, as Du Bos makes clear in Du Spirituel dans l'ordre littéraire (J. Corti, 1967):

Au génie poétique de première grandeur, les idées sont données en images, et il n'y a pas à les recevoir sous une forme différente. Si Mme. de Staël prétend qu'il est rare qu'un sentiment ou une idée soient dans toute leur force quand on peut les exprimer par une image, elle prouve qu'elle ignore tout de la constitution d'un grand poète chez qui c'est précisément quand il sont dans toute leur force, qu'un sentiment et une idée ne peuvent s'exprimer que par une image (pp. 83-83, italics in original).

In a second use of imagery Du Bos departs from the conclusions of Bergson. According to Du Bos, whereas an image refracts an intuition, the converse is possible; discursive thoughts give rise to images, which in turn lead to fresh insights:

L'image, c'est la chair même du verbe d'un grand poète: mais dans l'oeuvre d'un prosateur c'est la pensée qui doit tenir la toile: les objets qui y sont représentés, ce sont les multiples aspects de cette pensée elle-même et le rôle de l'image se borne ici à établir une juste hiérarchie entre les objets par la répartition savante de la lumière (Extraits, p. 80, 22.9.17).

The prose-writer moves from ideas to imagery rather than from perception

1. Bergson puts it in this way: "Ce que nous arriverons à ressaisir et à fixer, c'est une certaine image intermédiaire entre la simplicité de l'intuition concrète et la complexité des abstractions qui la traduisent ..." (P.M., p. 1347).

to image. For Bergson, an idea is artificial and unlife-like, but for Du Bos even ideas might have a living quality and can stimulate a thinker's researches.

Du Bos further maintains that language can limit and determine an intuition. The very expression can determine or create a more accurate insight:

Ma pensée a trop tendance à s'offrir comme une possibilité, comme une argile docile, à l'expression - en sorte que la direction ultérieure est donnée par l'expression plus que par la pensée même (Extraits, p. 79, 22.9.17).

Language is even granted an existential value of its own; it can modify the original intuition and bring into play forces unconceived at the moment of writing: "Suis dans une période où décidément le Journal qui a précédé m'apparaît toujours plus vrai que je ne le savais moi-même au moment où je le dictais" (Journal II, p. 174).

Nevertheless, the ideal is reached when the words and intended meaning are in perfect harmony in the writer's mind - then they articulate the intentions of the writer and lay bare his whole inner self:

Toute parole du Christ a quelque chose de si direct et de si plein que non seulement rien^{ne} s'interpose entre le sens et le mot, mais qu'il devient même impossible d'admirer à quel point le mot rend le sens, tant mot et sens ne font qu'un (Extraits, p. 89, 26.2.18).

Normally, however, there is a distinct rift between internal sensations and linguistic expression, or between intention and words. Bergson draws attention to this (notably in M.M., pp. 201-203) and Du Bos develops a more complex theory around it.

For Du Bos a 'sensation' is something physical which can nevertheless yield spiritual insight. The highest form of 'sensation' is that which brings "un accord parfait de toutes les facultés de mon être" (Extraits, pp. 98-99). For him, intellectual detachment is a kind of infirmity. It

is described as "l'état où la vie est perçue comme un fleuve qui coule à côté de vous et dans lequel, mystérieusement retenu sur la rive, il est impossible de se jeter ..." (Journal IV, p. 153, 1.8.28).

'Sensations' arrive of their own accord, and must not be artificially stimulated: "La sensation plénière suppose en l'être chez qui elle se produit cette part de bien heureuse passivité" (Journal I, p. 319). If this rule is not observed, then 'sensations' reveal nothing about reality, but rather display the type of forced emotion engendered by an actor:

Il y a des sensations qui ferment au lieu d'ouvrir, mais ce sont les sensations intéressées, celles à la recherche desquelles nous sommes partis, non point celles qui fondent sur nous (Journal III, p. 115).

The stimuli of 'sensations' are not only emotional or sensuous. Intellectual stimuli could give Du Bos an equally strong physical 'sensation'. Even so, Du Bos always regards the end product of a 'sensation' as emotional. In conversation with M.-A. Gouhier, Du Bos confessed: "Je suis une émotion morale. Le pouvoir d'émotion est, chez moi, pouvoir premier. Et plus l'émotion entre en jeu, plus l'émotion met en même temps les forces morales ..." (In Charles Du Bos, p. 47, 12.12.35). So there is a strong connection in Du Bos's mind between the emotional and moral life. In Qu'est-ce que la littérature? (Plon, 1945). Du Bos quotes Bergson: "Création signifie, avant tout, émotion" (p. 13; c.f. Les Deux Sources, p. 1013). He proceeds to say that "l'émotion est la soupape de sûreté de ces 'affections du coeur' à la 'sainteté' desquelles Keats croyait, c'est le premier stimulant de l'âme, grâce auquel l'âme prend le large pour ses merveilleux voyages et elle est aussi, comme l'a démontré la magistrale analyse de Bergson 'génératrice de la pensée': l'invention elle-même, bien qu'appartenant à l'ordre intellectuel, tire sa substance de la sensibilité" (p. 14).

It is typical of Du Bos that the theory is 'earthed' by a concrete example. Throughout his life he considered the state of 'exaltation' to be especially valuable in conveying meaning and reality to all things, since it is the natural state of the soul at its source and goal:

A l'origine de toute vie spirituelle - disons même de toute vie dès qu'elle s'élève au-dessus du simple réflexe - on trouve une source unique, identique; l'exaltation
(Approximations I, p. 89). 1

'Exaltation' is also called 'la réalité seconde' and is:

superposée à la vie qui lui est parallèle, mais libérée semble-t-il de toutes ses lois et qui surtout paraît avoir des dimensions tellement autres où la notion de temps mesurable, d'espace circonscrit, a l'air de choir et d'être aperçue dans sa chute à travers je ne sais quelle brusque déchirure ... (Journal I, p. 264).

Du Bos said that in the state of 'exaltation' he had "le sentiment de vivre dans une intimité serrée et comme étreinte avec certains des grands morts les plus miens" (Journal II, p. 160). In the same condition, Baudelaire according to Du Bos, "atteint à toucher Dieu par le seul effet de sa sensibilité, pour des motifs abstraits et sans intervention du monde extérieur" (p. 214). The completely physical feeling of the expression 'toucher Dieu' justifies P. Richardson's assertion that, for Du Bos, "physical sensation is as valid an access to the soul as any other" (The Aesthetic Approach of Charles Du Bos, Ph.D. Thesis, Bristol, 1970, p. 191). Du Bos shows a penchant for 'physical' imagery very often. For instance, he compares illness to 'eau tiède' (Journal IV, p. 147) and the state of misery to

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1. C.f. Bergson's L'Energie Spirituelle: "Les philosophes qui ont spéculé sur la signification de la vie et sur la destinée de l'homme n'ont pas assez remarqué que la nature a pris la peine de nous renseigner là-dessus elle-même. Elle nous avertit par un signe précis que notre destination est atteinte. Ce signe est la joie" (p. 832).

'dregs' (Journal I, p. 247).

Bergson believed somewhat similarly that the impact of a work - even its aesthetic value - could be judged by its effect on our emotional and moral life and by the quality of the emotion aroused in us:

Le mérite d'une oeuvre d'art ne se mesure pas tant à la puissance avec laquelle le sentiment suggéré s'empare de nous qu'à la richesse de ce sentiment lui-même: en d'autres termes, à côté des degrés d'intensité, nous distinguons instinctivement des degrés de profondeur et d'élévation. En analysant ce dernier concept, on verra que les sentiments et les pensées que l'artiste nous suggère expriment et résument une partie plus ou moins considérable de son histoire. Si l'art qui ne donne que des sensations est un art inférieur, c'est que l'analyse ne démêle pas souvent dans une sensation autre chose que cette sensation même. Mais la plupart des émotions sont grosses de mille sensations, sentiments ou idées qui les pénètrent ... (L'Essai, p. 15).

It is in this sense and for this reason that Du Bos too claims:

Je ne suis pas un intellectuel; je suis un émotif, mais dont l'émotion est susceptible d'être à tel point déclenchée par des sujets intellectuels, qu'à ceux qui me connaissent mal, j'apparais intellectuel avant tout ... (Journal III, p. 106, 29.2.26).

The only kind of thinking that is really worthwhile for Du Bos is thinking based on a solid residue of 'sensations':

If a thought does not deepen my apprehension both of self and of things in general, I do not care any longer for the thought ... that kind of thought is left with one as the solid residue of lived experience ... (Id.).

The genius, according to Du Bos, is the man most in touch with his own driving emotion, his heartfelt convictions. The genius is the man most true to himself and most fully himself. In a discussion with Du Bos, Bergson defined genius in this way: "le génie consiste peut-être essentiellement à prendre et à garder le contact avec un certain courant intérieur", to which Du Bos himself added: "et en tout cas, le génie de Bergson lui-même est essentiellement cela, et cette définition profonde me paraît expliquer en quoi consiste la perfection de ce style et pourquoi il n'a guère de rapport avec

ce que nous entendons habituellement par ce mot" (Journal I, p. 58).

When a genius gives voice to his preoccupations he makes known something about himself. Du Bos describes this as 'objectivité en personnalité' (Journal I, p. 61). An individual style is achieved because, not only does the genius express his thoughts, feelings and 'sensations', but also the very expression takes on the colour or 'tempo' of that person's very self, his character:

Tout style digne de ce nom se pourrait définir comme le sceau qu'impose la personnalité à la pensée ... le plus beau cas serait celui où la pensée émane de l'être tout entier mais où la passion qui la meut est tellement forte qu'elle passe pour ainsi dire dans l'expression d'une autorité sur laquelle celui-là même qui lui donna naissance ne peut rien: vous avez alors ce que l'on a admirablement nommé la géométrie enflammée de Pascal (Journal I, p. 57).

The essence of genius then lies in the creation, or, rather, recreation of self by self. The genius recreates his personal reactions - emotions and thoughts - loyally and accurately:

La création du romancier consistant à conduire jusqu'à l'être, à donner l'être successivement à toutes les possibilités qu'il porte en lui-même, à s'incarner en quelque sorte autant de fois qu'il amène des personnages au jour ... (Journal II, p. 373).

Henri Bergson, as has been seen, asserted that a genius is a man who retains close contact with all that lies most deep-seated within, but he is also able to bring out into the open things that remain obscure and unarticulated for most, but which are nevertheless true for all:

L'intelligence vraie est ce qui nous fait pénétrer à l'intérieur de ce que nous étudions, en toucher le fond, en aspirer à nous l'esprit et en sentir palpiter l'âme ... toujours l'intelligence est ce courant de sympathie qui s'établit entre l'homme et la chose, comme entre deux amis qui s'entendent à demi-mot et qui n'ont pas de secrets l'un pour l'autre (Mélanges, p. 556).

1. From the 'discours' at Lycée Voltaire, 1902, "De l'Intelligence".

Du Bos distinguishes between three types of genius: the animal, the human and the spiritual or angelic. They are separated not by superiority but by the area of life in which they move and to which they give expression. Flaubert is an animal genius because he seizes by intuition the full sense and feel of the material world and has the power to "pénétrer chaque atome, descendre jusqu'au fond de la matière ..." (Approximations, p. 187). The animal genius coincides with life, but his expression remains largely prior to reflection, moral consideration or any detached form of insight.

The human genius, as characterized by Chekhov, has "the gift of moral sympathy" (Journal VI, p. 59) and has intuitive powers not so much vis-à-vis the material world, but for other people's feelings and reactions to life. This retains something of Bergson's idea of 'coïncidence' with another personality¹. Chekhov's gift is "toujours se mettre à la place de l'autre et essayer non seulement de voir, mais dans la mesure du possible, de penser et de sentir comme lui" (Id.).

The third category of genius is the spiritual "for whom physical and social existence were mere shadows obscuring the path of life" (P. Richardson, op. cit., p. 68). This overall view summarizes the whole of life or of a man's life and sees in a nutshell its essence, purpose, meaning and destiny. Shelley is Du Bos's prime example; he is called 'le génie ange' who explores the "borderland qui sépare la vie de l'au delà" (Journal I, p. 80). In Du spirituel dans l'ordre littéraire Du Bos writes about him at length: his writing 'coïncides' with the spiritual inspiration at its source: "le swiftness est son tempo meme - et un tempo qui semble ici ne pas relever seulement de l'individualité du génie, mais

1. See P.M., p. 1394.

bien coïncider avec le tempo de l'inspiration en soi" (p. 30, italics in original). The notion of coinciding with inspiration itself must be a spiritual concept which presupposes a kind of objective existence for the muse. Du Bos goes on to explain that Shelley is like "un miroir dont la surface ne reflète que les formes de la pureté et de l'éclat" (Id.).

The genius, and in particular the 'human' or 'spiritual' genius, brings to bear moral considerations about life. For Du Bos, true genius always must be moral in nature because a person living life at a deep level is constantly confronted by moral dilemmas and is forced to make moral judgements. This is reminiscent of Bergson's concept of the 'hero' in Les Deux Sources. For Bergson, the hero is above all a moral hero of 'la religion dynamique'. Du Bos also connects the inherently moral nature of genius or heroism with religion:

Dans mon cas la méditation sur le génie est au centre de la conversion elle-même, et ... avec ma nature, renier, abandonner ou simplement se désintéresser d'un des génies sur lesquels j'ai médité de la sorte, n'équivaudrait à rien de moins qu'à renier un des échelons de ma conversion même (Journal VIII, p. 52, 12.4.33).

Bergson wrote of the 'santé intellectuelle' of the Christian mystic in these terms:

Elle se manifeste par le goût de l'action, la faculté de s'adapter et de se réadapter aux circonstances, la fermeté jointe à la souplesse, le discernement prophétique du possible et de l'impossible, un esprit de simplicité qui triomphe des complications, enfin un bon sens supérieur (Les Deux Sources, p. 1169).

In other words, the Christian mystic is well adapted to life and hence is aware of the truth about life.

From an analysis of Du Bos's ideas about genius, one can see that any truth is to be felt and experienced through the whole personality, and

not simply analyzed intellectually from a detached viewpoint. According to Bergson, the intellect alone is intrinsically detached from its object but Du Bos seems to differ from Bergson by insisting that the presence of the intellect is necessary to make sense of an intuition. One of André Gide's alleged faults is to "agir sans réflexion", which "peut être psychologiquement très fécond, à cause du solide résidu d'expérience qui en découle", but "agir sans réflexion occasionne des désastres non seulement pour soi-même mais pour les autres" (Journal III, p. 106). Thus, thought without 'sensations' is very unlikely to grasp the whole truth; but, equally, a pursuit of experiences for their own sake is dangerous in the sphere of moral truth. It is the element of thought - considered reflection - which introduces the element of judgement and discrimination. Thinking which follows the flux of real life ~~can~~ "serpente comme ces teintes délicates dont certains marbres sont veinés" (Extraits, p. 69, 12.4.17).

Bergson in fact bears out the same thesis - not so much in L'Evolution Créatrice as elsewhere. In a conference given in 1895 called "Le bon sens et les études classiques" he draws an analogy between possessing 'le bon sens' and having the intellectual power to think flexibly:

Je vois donc dans le bon sens l'énergie intérieure d'une intelligence qui se reconquiert à tout moment sur elle-même, éliminant les idées faites pour laisser la place aux idées qui se font ... (p. 29).

Du Bos also uses Bergson's analysis of 'intelligence' in the detrimental sense. In a discussion of Benjamin Constant, he calls Constant "un des hommes les plus intelligents qui furent jamais" (Grandeur et Misère de Benjamin Constant, Corréa, 1946, p. 180). But Constant's weakness is that he does not engage the emotions in his reflections: "une intelligence lumineuse, mais sans rayonnement ni chaleur, c'est l'intelligence même de

Constant" (p. 174). While his intellect detaches itself from his inner life, "au dedans l'être est alors aussi étale, aussi immobile, aussi inanime qu'un étang" (Id.). Constant's intellect is like that which Bergson describes in L'Evolution Créatrice¹ - it acts upon a dead, static world of its own composition like a player in a chess game. This accounts for Constant's need for passion:

C'est à cause de la mort intérieure que Constant a un tel besoin de la passion, et c'est à cause de cela que lui-même se met en état de passion, qu'il la provoque avant de la subir (p. 185).

The book by Du Bos on Constant shows above all else how closely he adheres to Bergson's thought patterns - even with respect to the controversial critique of the concept. However, Du Bos sees further into Bergson's mind than most other critics of his time, because he understands that the intelligence can also be turned away from its preoccupation with matter to the analysis of the inner life - the 'durée' of 'le moi intérieur'. If the intellect does retain contact with 'la durée réelle' it then has what Du Bos calls "l'épaisseur de l'intelligence même, la multiplicité des timbres, des instruments qui entrent simultanément en jeu, même dans une formulation en son essence intellectuelle" (Journal II, p. 10).

In Du Bos's estimation the intellect should take its place as one aspect of consciousness which in its completeness also comprises moods, memories, emotions, thoughts, desires and all 'sensations'. Du Bos may have this in mind when he speaks of his 'house of thought' or 'espace psychique':

Cette sensation de 'l'espace psychique', du 'temple du dedans' que j'ai étudiée dans mon George, m'habite depuis plusieurs semaines à un degré que je n'ai jamais comblé, et selon un

1. See E.C., p. 609 ff.

mode qui me prouve après coup combien j'avais raison de tenir ici aux images spatiales: vis-à-vis de moi-même je suis dans la situation de quelqu'un qui rend tour-à-tour visite à divers étages, à divers paliers de son être ... (Journal V, p. 55, 10.6.30).

However, Georges Poulet in building his whole thesis (La Conscience Critique, Chapter VI) on a theory of the person as a place and on Du Bos's 'spatial' conception of the mind, overstresses the case and misses the point that a person is 'le lieu de ses états' - a locus rather than a place. Du Bos's definition of 'le spirituel' in Du spirituel dans l'ordre littéraire is also revealing:

Le spirituel est la spiritualité saisie à son surgissement dans l'être, avant qu'elle ne devienne plus tard en lui une manière pour ainsi dire régulière et ininterrompue de penser et de sentir (p. 8).

The 'spirituel' itself does not change, as regards its nature, but it is less a state than a movement. If a man becomes 'spirituel' he becomes the locus where the spiritual can reside, but this does not mean that the whole person is a place in any normal sense: "Le spirituel est un élément insaisissable en lui-même, qui n'est jamais identifié, appréhendé que dans ses manifestations" (p. 16).

The idea of the mind as a house with many different areas and levels may give the impression of a static consciousness, but Du Bos, staying close to Bergson (and 'la durée réelle') retains the element of movement by proposing that each man has his own 'tempo':

Il faudrait partir de la notion que quand on veut vraiment approcher un auteur, ses idées importent peu, ses sentiments même ... moins qu'on ne le pense communément ... Ce qui souverainement importe, c'est le pas le pouls, le battement qui sont les siens ... (Journal II, p. 230).

The 'pace' of a writer varies according to his approach to life; it is to do with the consciousness rather than specific ideas or feelings. The speed

of a writer's 'tempo' is partly dependent upon the time he spends reflecting on a subject. Keats's tortuous meditations make his 'tempo' very slow (see Extraits, p. 152). Shelley goes straight to the heart of the matter and retains only the essence - his 'tempo' is very rapid. The 'tempo' is the length of time a 'sensation' takes to reverberate throughout all the faculties. A. Bertocci suggests in Charles Du Bos and English Literature¹ that "real movement requires the writer to be on the inside of motion and not to regulate the pace of thought from the outside" (p. 48). Du Bos himself also clarifies the relationship between thought and time or 'tempo': "Entre l'instantanéité de la compréhension et l'entrée en jeu de la réflexion, ce qui se place c'est l'expérience même de la vie" (Journal VI, p. 38).

This long reflection on the psyche leads to the conclusion that for Du Bos, as for Bergson, man contains within himself and his nature the two aspects of reality - matter and spirit:

Nous sommes au point de jonction de la nature et de l'esprit, et c'est à cause du lieu d'union qui si tôt s'était établi entre la vie et la joie, que Wordsworth nous offre, en sa personne et en son oeuvre, un admirable exemple de l'équilibre qui peut régner dans l'être humain entre les deux hémisphères: nature et esprit (Le Spirituel dans l'Ordre littéraire, p. 171).

The spirit in man can alone comprehend and recompose the material world or 'nature'. The spiritual is therefore for Du Bos the primary reality and not vice versa: man is seen as "le lieu par où le courant spirituel élit de passer" (Journal V, p. 44).

Bergson's exposition of 'l'élan vital' as both movement and consciousness obviously has something in common with Du Bos's 'spirituel', and the more personalized view of 'l'élan' occurs in L'Energie Spirituelle:

Visiblement une force travaille devant nous, qui cherche

1. King's Crown Press, Columbia, New York, 1949.

à se libérer de ses entraves et aussi à se dépasser elle-même, à donner d'abord tout ce qu'elle a et ensuite plus qu'elle n'a: comment définir autrement l'esprit (p. 831).

However, it is not until Les Deux Sources (1932) that Bergson specifically analyzes man's spiritual life in detail.

Like Bergson, Du Bos sees the spiritual as the source (rather than goal) of life:

A mes yeux, la spiritualité se place au départ, à l'origine: ce n'est point vers elle que nous allons, c'est d'elle que nous découillons: courant ou source, nous lui livrons passage (Journal V, p. 148, 22.5.29).

Later he adds the idea that the spiritual is a goal as well as a source, and, secondly, that the source and goal of life is personal, transcending the world and yet present in it. Creation and evolution become simply aspects of the work of God, in whom the totality of 'le spirituel' has its being. Even mental phenomena partake of this spiritual realm: "Où vont nos idées? Elles vont dans la mémoire de Dieu" (Journal IX, p. 145, 18.7.37).

At this later stage, Du Bos develops a virtually physical sense of the invisible, which is not just the reality of the inner life, the memory or the mind or even 'l'élan de la vie', but the presence of a spiritual world distinct from all these things and yet infiltrating them. A short while after his conversion (on 14th December 1927) Du Bos wrote: "Je me sentais comme enveloppé d'une épaisseur invisible" (Extraits, p. 420) and at the same time he makes other references to an invisible reality - e.g. "ceux qui ont le sens de l'invisible ... c'est dans la solitude ... que leur vie s'accélère, s'intensifie" (Journal III, p. 362, 14.12.27). It is clear that Du Bos imagined spiritual realities to be present to consciousness and to the feelings and yet to be distinct from them. In fact, he goes out of his way to preserve and uphold Bergson's conception of 'la mystique profane' nearly two years after his conversion (22nd May 1929).

For Du Bos all spirituality is something available to psychological and emotional experience. And, if such is the case, then God is to be reached in the same way as is the self, the mind and the memory - through introspection:

Quand je dis que je sens Dieu en moi, ce qui équivaut simplement à ceci que dans mes meilleurs moments ces moments ... s'inscrivent d'eux-mêmes dans la zone religieuse (Journal III, p. 92, 12.8.26).

Only a few weeks after this Du Bos squarely faced the problem about his own experience: "... s'agit-il d'un dieu ou d'une simple projection du moi le plus intime?" (p. 98, 24.9.26).

What can be asserted with conviction is that Du Bos's method probes profound psychological states and by introspection he moves from the fact of memory and of the subconscious to a new and deeper awareness. The more superficial self is fragmented into faculties, whereas the deeper self is single, unique and charged with latent potential.

Du Bos felt the separation between the two levels of the awareness virtually as a schism within himself:

J'ai la sensation qu'à l'intérieur de moi-même nous sommes toujours au moins deux ... l'être temporel et comme de hasard que l'on se trouve constituer, et la conscience de cet être l'on prend (Journal II, p. 376).

The former is "la fausse continuité de l'être humain, sa continuité d'apparence" (Journal II, p. 376, 2.6.25). This is reminiscent of Bergson's division between 'le moi superficiel' and 'le moi profond' in L'Essai:

Au-dessous du moi aux états bien définis, un moi où succession implique fusion et organisation ... nos perceptions, sensations, émotions et idées se présentent sous un double aspect: l'un net, précis, mais impersonnel; l'autre confus, infiniment mobile, et inexprimable, parce que le langage ne saurait le saisir sans en fixer la mobilité ni l'adapter à sa forme banale sans le faire tomber dans le domaine commun (pp. 85-86).

However, Du Bos posits a soul transcending the temporal self, whereas Bergson only admits the possibility of this. In Approximations I (p. 67) Du Bos refers to 'le moi profond' but in Journal I (p. 267) it becomes 'la réalité seconde' and elsewhere 'le moi du deus' and even 'deus in nobis' (pp. 292-302). If 'le moi profond' is a neutral term, 'deus in nobis' certainly implies that something other than the self lies embedded within it. The religious implications of this were not fully faced by Du Bos for some years and yet they were not lost on him at this time (1921-1923):

Jean [Baruzi] tenait sur ce point à se retracter - que la substitution du mot âme au mot dieu ne fait que reculer le problème, et pas plus que celui de dieu le mot d'âme ne devrait être employé. Mais là je me sens on much more solid ground - d'abord parce que pour m'interdire je commencerai par attendre qu'on ait réfuté le spiritualisme bergsonien ... puis parce que ... la valeur esthétique et bien plus encore affective du mot âme est trop immense et trop indispensable à la fois pour qu'on s'en puisse passer (Extrait, p. 300).

It is the creative power of the 'moi profond' or 'deus in nobis' which leads Du Bos to a belief in God, for he becomes convinced that man's creative gifts and powers derive from and are part of a greater creative energy. The 'moi profond' is a positive creativity present in the personality. It is especially in times of illness or relaxation that Du Bos comes to realize this:

Journée d'une plénitude singulière et où, tout le temps, j'ai eu la sensation de vivre en contact constant avec le centre de la sensibilité de mon activité créatrice (Journal II, pp. 251-252, 17.1.25).

The 'moi profond' gives life to or brings to life the specific ideas, sensations and memories which jostle one another into consciousness. Du Bos mentions a number of occasions on which he experienced the creative outpouring of the self; for example, on 22nd November 1926:

Ma plénitude intérieure atteint depuis quelques jours

à son comble ... tant de richesses tout ensemble entrent et sortent en vertu de cette luxueuse dépense perpétuellement jaillissante ... (Journal III, p. 136).

Du Bos maintains that, if we dwell only in the realm of 'le moi superficiel' then "nous sommes sortis de ce bain personnel dans lequel obscurément nous sentons que nous devons demeurer plongés, - et ... nous grelottons sur le rivage". The writer who creates from such shallow experience "pourra s'approuver du dehors, il ne pourra pas ne pas se désapprouver du dedans" (both Extraits, pp. 259-260). Such a writer can use neat turns of phrase and second-hand formulae but he cannot create for he is out of touch with life at its source.

However closely connected Bergson's ideas on the creative process are to Du Bos's own, all the same Du Bos brings a change in emphasis; progressing from a simple delving into the unconscious to the recognition of a 'deus in nobis' leads him from an analysis of the technical nature of the creative process to an interest in God as creator and his relation to the observing self. Paradoxically, the very process of creativity eventually proves to be a stumbling-block in the furtherance of research into this new field of enquiry. The conflict between his old introspective relationship with inner self and the new relationship with God is felt acutely by Du Bos:

Chez moi le retour à Dieu a coupé la relation avec
mon âme sans m'assurer la relation avec Dieu
(Journal III, p. 345).

The active concentration on the soul as an object was replaced by his response and reaction to a separate individual within himself placing demands upon him. Du Bos no longer faces his own inner creative self but his creator as such. This new orientation inevitably has repercussions in the Journal:

La vision intérieure est toute transformée. Mais ici

la seconde naissance ne s'accompagne pas tant d'une joie véritable que d'un accroissement de poids et de prix, et comme de la gestation du monde des valeurs (Journal III, p. 345, 15.9.27).

Du Bos's religion is clearly personal and emotional above all else. He is not satisfied with second-hand religion based on doctrine and revelation, but prefers the lived experience of God's grace: "Je quittai l'Evangile lui-même pour appartenir tout entier à la marée montante de l'émotion" (Journal IV, p. 44, 30.1.28). The desire for first-hand experience is more than a rejection of complacent belief; more even than a rejection of arid intellectual speculation: personal experience is for him the sole authority or ground for conviction and commitment and it alone can carry him along "jusqu'au rivage final" (p. 72, 2.4.28).

Du Bos's use of the term 'émotion' still has Bergsonian undercurrents long after conversion: "peut-être j'inscris trop toute ma vie religieuse sous la catégorie de l'élan ..." (Journal VIII, p. 15, 5.8.31). He makes explicit the paramount importance of 'emotions' in his own preoccupations: "La littérature n'est rien d'autre que la gamme entière de toutes les émotions humaines dont chacune, grâce à tel ou tel génie, a trouvé son impérissable expression" (Approximations VII, p. 1419).

As he grew old, Du Bos became more and more subject to this 'émotion', and particularly to his 'sensation' of God's presence. He records many occasions on which he broke into tears in services. He attributed the lack of the sense of God to the Fall of man - "le quasi incurable sentiment que nous nous séparons de Lui" (Approximations VI, p. 1118). In the end, he confirms that he is "tout émotion" and values everything "par l'émotion", once again noting his "joie à rencontrer chez mon maître Bergson ... la formule: 'Création signifie avant tout émotion'" (Journal IX, p. 110, 3.9.36).

Having said all this, it should be stressed, however, that one of Du Bos's reiterated misgivings about the step of faith was his fear of sacrificing the intellect to the will, which was to him like a betrayal of integrity and a rejection of truth. Nevertheless he took solace in the realization that:

les vrais croyants semblent unanimes à dire que non seulement leur foi ne gêne en rien l'exercice de leur pensée, mais que ce n'est qu'à partir d'elle qu'ils ont connu la liberté même de la pensée (Journal III, p. 238, 25.4.27).

Even more dangerous than sacrificing the intellect is the sacrifice of the world of lived experience to a world of fixed concepts. Du Bos insists that "la foi comme solution, comme confort spirituel, comme cessation de pensées, me repousse complètement" (p. 46, 20.3.26). The fixed position and unjustified self-assurance of the agnostic is as dangerous as that of the ultra-dogmatic Christian. Whilst reading Meredith, Du Bos wonders if Meredith ever put this question to himself: "si cependant ce n'était que mon ingéniosité qui avait construit ce bel échafaudage?" (p. 77, 9.6.26).

In the event, Du Bos's conversion required the assent of the whole self - his desires, thoughts, inclinations and moral judgements were all involved: "There is no other solution than to ... closet myself with the unravelling of all that lies most deeply seated in me," he said five months after his conversion (p. 367, 9.12.27). So the final role of the intellect is not to undergo experiences nor to replace them but to interpret them:

Condamner l'analyse équivaut à condamner l'instrument même dont l'intelligence ne peut se passer, non point tant pour comprendre (car à mes yeux et en tout cas chez moi c'est l'intuition qui comprend), mais pour expliciter ce qu'elle comprend, pour l'exprimer et pour le rendre tout à fait clair à elle-même (Journal VIII, p. 90, 13.6.33).

The Christian world which Du Bos had decided to enter differed from an irreligious world in that it was no longer the original idea which had pride of place; neither were all experiences deemed to have equal value. It was a world where moral considerations were of the utmost importance, and these took a pre-eminent position in his literary criticism. He was not concerned to stand in judgement, but was concerned to seek the truth; and the truth, for him, bore a relation to moral questions by its very nature. Behind this view is the idea that ideas matter but choice between ideas matters vitally: "Il faut vivre comme on pense, sinon, tôt ou tard, on finit par penser comme on a vécu" (Journal V, p. 64, 26.2.29). As always, Du Bos's ideas find an echo in Bergson: "Ce que nous faisons," writes Bergson, "dépend de ce que nous sommes; nous sommes, dans une certaine mesure, ce que nous faisons, et nous nous créons continuellement nous-mêmes. Cette création de soi par soi est d'autant plus complète, d'ailleurs qu'on raisonne mieux sur ce qu'on fait" (E.C., p. 500).

The moral sense of life is engendered by a sense of identification - the imaginative ability to put oneself into someone else's place - to partake of his joys and sufferings. This leads to compassion, and is clearly assisted by Bergson's intuitive method. As he himself explains in L'Essai:

Considérons la pitié par exemple. Elle consiste d'abord à se mettre par la pensée à la place des autres, à souffrir de leur souffrance. Mais si elle n'était rien de plus ... elle nous inspirerait l'idée de fuir les misérables plutôt que de leur porter secours, car la souffrance nous fait naturellement horreur. Il est possible que ce sentiment d'horreur se trouve à l'origine de la pitié, mais un élément nouveau ne tarde pas à y joindre, un besoin d'aider nos semblables et de soulager leur souffrance (p. 16).

The moral action is stimulated not only by the sense of identification, however, but also by a distinct choice - a determination of the will. This choice can be avoided, even by a sensitive person, but for Bergson and Du Bos such avoidance is a shedding of responsibility with regard to life itself;

turning a blind eye to the truth.

In fact it is only through sympathy that reality is really grasped fully: "l'art a pour objet d'écarter ce qui nous masque cette réalité et de nous permettre d'en prendre une vue plus directe et plus sensible ..." (Journal I, p. 29). The artist, like Du Bos himself, is: "un être moral et non un être intellectuel, - un être moral qui applique toutes ses forces - et même les morales - à des objets et des préoccupations intellectuelles" (Extraits, pp. 114-115, 17.5.20). Because the intellect is normally detached, it lacks sympathy and normally counsels self-interest. This is one of Bergson's theses in Les Deux Sources:

Que va donc faire l'intelligence? C'est une faculté que l'individu emploie naturellement à le tirer des difficultés de la vie; elle ne suivra pas la direction d'une force qui travaille au contraire par l'espèce et qui, si elle prend en considération l'individu, le fait dans l'intérêt de l'espèce. Elle ira tout droit à des solutions égoïstes (Les Deux Sources, p. 1053).

Bergson concludes that true morality stems largely from emotional sympathy and not from intellectual understanding:

L'obligation qui s'attache à l'ordre est, dans ce qu'elle a d'original et de fondamental, infra-intellectuelle. L'efficacité de l'appel tient à la puissance de l'émotion qui fut jadis provoquée, qui l'est ou pourrait l'être ... (Les Deux Sources, p. 1048).

Du Bos, in Le Dialogue avec André Gide, accuses Gide of playing out the moral and emotional life on the level of a capricious intellect - "il [a] été conduit à voir dans la morale une dépendance de l'esthétique" (p. 21), and, to prove the point, Du Bos quotes from Si le grain ne meurt: "l'art et la religion en moi dévotieusement s'épousaient, et je goûtais ma plus parfaite extase au plus fondu de leur accord" (quoted on p. 44). Gide consequently has everything in the moral realm out of perspective:

Ce qui rend la situation de Gide humainement insoluble ... c'est qu'entre bien et mal il a renversé les termes, considérant le mal comme bien et le bien comme mal, et

surtout voyant dans le bien la tentation majeure à laquelle par-dessus tout il importe de ne pas céder (Journal IV, p. 147).

Gide wants to keep his options open, remaining 'disponible', but Du Bos sees this merely as a failure to understand the moral world and, worse, as a failure to know oneself. The self, as Bergson made clear in L'Essai¹, is true to itself through its very choices and not when it suspends decisions in the hope of retaining its freedom. That kind of freedom is empty. There is no real development of or deepening of the self with Gide; it is simply "une suite d'instantanés" (pp. 259-260).

Thus, moral choice and moral commitment are an integral part of the personality - they radiate from the true self and are not a spurious addition. Sincerity therefore takes on a vital role for Du Bos. A man must be true to himself - his feelings, experiences and thoughts. For this very quality Du Bos praises Charles Péguy; he had "ce besoin de confession qu'éprouvait si fortement Péguy, et par où il m'apparaît si nouveau et si important dans notre littérature ..." (Journal I, p. 184). On the other hand, in Byron Du Bos sees all the faults of a play-actor; a man who conceives himself as having to live out a destiny; a man remaining true not to himself but to some intellectual idea of himself². It is only when real emotions are brought into play, rather than forced or self-induced ones, that one is able to find oneself and to come face to face with reality.

There are of course pitfalls and difficulties when a particular moral outlook is brought to bear in literary criticism and the dangers of Du Bos's method highlight this difficulty. Sometimes he can be so overcome emotionally

1. L'Essai, pp. 109-114.

2. See Byron et le besoin de la fatalité, Correa, 1929 (Quoted later from the 1946 edition).

by the impact of a book that his moral judgement is clouded. He says of Ruskin's Life of Cook: "I have plunged deep and I must, alas, stop reading, otherwise I will be swallowed and drowned" (Journal I, p. 386). Another problem is that Du Bos can hold a moral position based on flimsy evidence and insufficient research because of his reliance on his intuitive method with its emphasis on his emotional reaction. This is the case with regard to his assessment of Byron's wife, Annabella, whose alleged moral virtue is not grounded in fact at all:

With the exception of Astarte, in my characterization of Lady Byron I had to rely entirely upon what may be termed intuitive guess-work (Byron and the need for fatality, p. vii).

In his judgement of Byron himself, Du Bos relied on only six books from which to write his own work. Another problem is that there is not a great step between having a personal sympathy and affection for someone to esteeming their work too highly. This was the case with Anna de Noailles, whom Du Bos considered to be an artistic genius, but she is not highly rated by most critics¹.

To return to the question of the intellect and faith, Du Bos took the trouble to discuss his intellectual difficulties with Maritain, as is evidenced by later volumes of the Journal². He basically agreed with Augustine, however in regarding faith as the prerequisite and placing it logically prior to understanding:

Le christianisme est tout entier dans la relation au

1. See Du Bos's La comtesse de Noailles et le climat du génie (La Table Ronde, 1949).

2. See, for example, Journal III, p. 226, Journal IV, pp. 163-165. According to the Journal Du Bos read Maritain's Antimoderne (22.4.27); Réflexions sur l'Intelligence (23.4.27); Grandeur et Misère de la Méta-physique (22.9.27) and Religion et Culture (August 1934).

suraturel, et ne peut même pas se passer de l'adhésion à un ordre transcendant ... d'une part le vrai christianisme n'est pas concevable sans la foi, et de l'autre le christianisme ne saurait se réduire à la morale chrétienne (Journal III, p. 88, 10.8.26).

The psychological or emotional approach to God lays itself open to the charge of believing in an immanent rather than transcendent creator, but Du Bos's God is not restricted to 'le moi du deus' or even to the world as 'l'élan vital': on the contrary, Du Bos in his turn accused Nietzsche and Proust of the doctrine of immanence. Of Nietzsche he claimed: "il défie quelque élément supra-individuel ou même supra-humain" (Journal III, p. 378) and he calls Proust's technique "l'effort ... pour équivaloir à Dieu en dehors de lui par la mystique apperception de l'essence du Temps" (Id.). Significantly, he adds: "Tel est pour l'homme le besoin de Dieu s'il refuse le Mystère de l'incarnation" (Id.). Du Bos attacked the doctrine of immanence on the grounds that it "aboutit bon gré mal gré à la suppression d'un Dieu-personne" (Journal IV, p. 78). But, by way of contrast, he equally strongly attacked the doctrine of pure transcendence, since its proponents:

paraissent toujours impliquer que transcendance exclue immanence - alors qu'en fait ces deux attributs non seulement se complètent, mais ... ne peuvent se passer l'un de l'autre (Id.).

It is through the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ that Du Bos overcomes the problem: "Le mot de vérité n'a de sens qu'incarné en Dieu précisément" (Id.). This fits in with Bergson's love of the individual truth or the personal experience as opposed to systems of abstractions. The incarnation is a stumbling-block to schematizers, as Du Bos asserts:

Le Verbe né d'une femme, le Verbe né dans une crèche, pour en venir enfin à la dernière humiliation du Verbe expirant sur une croix: c'est ce qui a révolté ces esprits superbes. Car ils ne voulaient point comprendre que la première vérité qu'il y eût à

apprendre à l'homme, que son orgueil avait perdu,
était de s'humilier (Extraits, p. 416).

So, in the final analysis, the truth is approached most nearly, for Du
Bos as for Augustine, through love for a person and not through the
intellectual harmonizing and ordering of the Universe:

Autant que [les homme] s'approchaient de Dieu par
leur intelligence, autant s'en éloignaient-ils par
leur orgueil (Extraits, p. 416).

Il faut que chaque exaltation ait pour résultat
l'approfondissement en moi d'une conscience
proprement religieuse (Extraits, p. 360).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

The brevity of this Conclusion should not be taken as evidence that Bergson's influence on French Catholic thought was strictly limited, for the opposite is true; his influence was so widespread and far-reaching that it is better seen in the details of each individual chapter than in the broad lines of a Conclusion. There are, however, certain aspects of Bergson's philosophy which had an especially noteworthy and marked impact.

The first aim of this work was to reassess Bergson's own philosophy in terms of its natural development and direction, which was towards a religious outlook on life. In the past, and even now, far too many critics of Bergson have either ignored completely the religious implications of his work or have viewed them as a somewhat fanciful addition to the more technical and logical analyses in the areas of psychology and epistemology. I shall quote from one recent example:

To infer from the existence of life in various forms and at various points of the surface of things, to some absolute creative force or current lying behind it, and of which these forms are only fragments or partial expressions, appears perfectly gratuitous (A.E. Pilkington, Bergson & his influence: a reassessment, C.U.P., 1976, pp. 19-20).

It is true to say that any theory can be considered to be gratuitous until the evidence for it is properly examined. Anybody criticizing a philosophy should be prepared to review the details of its arguments even if he does not share the conclusions of the arguments. If Bergson cannot substantiate his claims for the 'élan vital' it is fair to say that his assertions are 'gratuitous'; they can be accepted only on faith and rejected for lack of proof. However, Bergson's case does not

rest on his positing the religious world-view as an addendum or leap of faith but as the result of his observation of the real world.

Pilkington's lack of sympathy with Bergson's religious outlook results in the conclusion that "if the conceptions contained germinally in L'Evolution Créatrice and fully developed in Les Deux Sources are compared, it must become clear that, far from the latter being a necessary completion of the former, it is not even a natural one" (p. 21).

Pilkington then goes on to say that the term 'God' in L'Evolution Créatrice is "nothing but a semantic superfluity" (p. 23) because it is equivalent to "life, action and liberty". In actual fact, what Bergson means by this is that God is the source of life, action and liberty or that this is how his action is seen in the world; this is his kind of activity.

It is very much analagous to St. John's saying that "God is love" (I John 4, v. 8). The terms are not reversible. It means simply that from the human point of view God's activity is like that of a loving father. Dr. Pilkington moves rapidly to his conclusion: "If statements about God can without loss be translated into statements about life or human activity, then theological language is dispensable" (p. 23). This argument looks suspiciously like a positivist backlash and is made without taking any account of the fact that it is in the very data of experience that God's activity must be seen. Moreover, the facts of life can point beyond themselves and raise the possibility, even necessity, of a creator who is both within and beyond human life. A light in a room should lead one to wonder where the source of light is and, even if the light bulb is hidden by a shade, its existence can be vouched for with some confidence. Similarly, the remarkable blueprint for a plant's growth, shape and colour, etc., that pre-exist in a seed might lead the careful investigator to suggest the possibility of a full-grown plant sprouting at some future date even though

the sense-evidence of this is not before his eyes.

In just the same way, every detail of Bergson's research bears upon his religious conclusions, and it is in this sense that a proper account should be given of his religious philosophy. As F.C. Copleston rightly says: "the convictions which Bergson has already formed certainly (and naturally) influence his reflections on the data relevant to man's moral and religious life" (A History of Philosophy: Maine de Biran to Sartre, Search Press, London, 1975, p. 203). Bergson makes it quite clear that there are many aspects of his philosophy which lead him to the hypothesis of God. The positing of an 'élan vital' is only one of these. I have attempted to show earlier that the problems relating to free will and determinism, to man's mental and physical make-up, to the unity and continuity of the personality, to the harmony of nature, to man's rationality and others are all 'religious' questions of the first order and contribute to persuading Bergson to accept and later assume a religious view of life as a whole. He does not come to his conclusions arbitrarily or make 'gratuitous' (unfounded) assertions and generalizations: his conclusions are supported by the groundwork of his earlier researches which proceeded without presuppositions. The religious view of the world is not something which Bergson imposed, like a scheme or system into which every aspect of life must fit; on the contrary, he examined the individual components through diverse pieces of evidence and then discerned a pattern in the whole.

At the time of its inception, Bergson's philosophy had a strongly destructive element and set out to expose the flaws in the positivist systems, in rationalist Greek thought and in the phenomenism of Kant. According to Bergson, all three of these displayed two similar features: they did not grasp the significance of the fact that time is an integral

part of real life (just as much as life as we know it is inconceivable without three-dimensional space), and, secondly, as a result, they artificially attempted to unify life under scientific or abstract principles.

The interesting fact to emerge from this magisterial 'pars destruens' is that Bergson made positive use of certain of the tenets of contemporary philosophy. He placed a high premium on the value of experiment and observation and in any conclusion reached he tried to keep close to the evidence of sense experience. His philosophy was indeed metaphysical - but it was also empirical.

Where Bergson added something to contemporary methods was in the realm of the inner life. The mind can turn outwards, reflecting and reflecting upon the external world, but it can also analyze the self and its states. This is an undisputed truth of experience¹. In a real sense one can be 'self-conscious'. This technique led Bergson to see human consciousness as, on the one hand, mechanical and partaking of the physical world of cause and effect - the consciousness has automatic and reflex reactions - but at a deeper level consciousness is free from the laws of cause and effect, from the laws of space and matter. The real personality enjoys a unity and consistency which is independent of mechanical time passing and exists often in a potential, latent form occasionally rising to the surface in the form of memory or decisive choice. The deeper self, 'le moi profond', has an identity separate from the acts of the body and the thoughts of the conscious mind.

The discovery of the 'moi profond' unites the person to the world of 'spirit', the world of spontaneity and freedom from the fixed and

1. Jean-Paul Sartre built his whole philosophical system around this fact.

regular flow of clock time. The mechanical behaviour of matter is quite different from the life and movement of the deep consciousness.

The mind understands the world of fixed relations and regular, predictable movement by the faculty Bergson called 'intelligence', but when the mind turns inward and looks at the reality of the real self ('l'ame') it sees there a unity beneath apparent diversity and continuity beneath an apparently disjointed and fragmentary personality. If this type of vision can be carried outwards into the real world, the unity of life outside can be glimpsed and the continuity of life is seen in the movement of 'la durée réelle'. True relations can be grasped between certain elements in life by this process he called 'intuition'. It is not the same as constructing an abstract plan from certain component parts and relating them to each other by logical or abstract similarities.

The discovery of these two aspects of knowledge gave a new impetus to Catholic epistemology and led to the rediscovery of Aquinas's distinction between 'intellectus' (apprehension) and 'ratio' (the discursive analysis of reality). Once the confusion and discrepancy between Bergson's 'intelligence' and Aquinas's 'intellectus' had been clarified (especially by P. Rousselot and J. Maréchal), the way was cleared for a new approach to Christian doctrine and practice and also a new approach to God.

Edouard LeRoy and Lucien Laberthonnière led the way, claiming that knowing about God and making statements about God followed the guidance of the logical faculty, 'ratio'. However, there existed a second and better way of approaching God, which was more direct but unfortunately less susceptible to proof or verification. This was to know the reality of God's existence and activity through daily experience and action. 'To know' is obviously more direct than 'to know about' but the former is notoriously problematic: what does 'knowing' involve or mean? This

has been a central problem for philosophers ever since.

LeRoy attempted to resolve the problem by arguing that the 'proof' of such knowledge is first and foremost subjective; that is, the knower alone can test his conclusions, but it is nonetheless real. One puts into practice one's theories, one tests out what one purports to know by living it out as though it were true. If the facts of life do not contradict or militate against one's experience of 'knowing', one can remain confident that one's knowledge is based on firm foundations.

Joseph Maréchal tried a different line of approach. His main contention in Essai sur la psychologie des mystiques (1923) was that 'knowing' in the case of religious truths is closely connected to the sensation of presence. Knowing a person has a great deal to do with reacting to the reality of that person confronting oneself. In a similar way, to know God is very largely reacting to the reality of his living presence within and outside oneself. Such a sensation is clearly antecedent to analysis and any discursive understanding, but forms the raw material for this.

A number of Catholic thinkers then implicitly accepted the new approach to knowledge by admitting the reality of self-consciousness. In so doing they had to allow that knowledge of the self could not possibly be discursive - one did not have to 'prove' or 'analyze' one's own feelings and thoughts in order to know what they were. Thus, Maritain and Roland-Gosselin among others opened up the realm of the inner self to philosophical enquiry. This renewed a school of philosophical thought dating in particular from Maine de Biran (but ultimately from St. Augustine) and could quite possibly follow in the same direction as he did - towards the discovery of the God who was closer than one is to oneself - the God who lives within. This discovery was also very much the starting-point and

motivation of Du Bos's method of literary criticism.

The real significance of this new means to knowledge initiated by Bergson was in opening up a new path for metaphysical research¹.

In a late article on Bergson, Blondel acknowledged this fact:

[Bergson] a tendu à libérer la pensée de l'illusion archaïque qui opposait infini et parfait pour mieux comprendre que la fixité et le repos, loin d'être l'absolu et la perfection, sont exclus de l'éternelle vérité et de la suprême bonté auxquelles aspire l'inépuisable exigence de notre inquiétude ("La philosophie ouverte" in Henri Bergson: Essais et Témoignages, Ed. de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1943, p. 77).

In short, Bergson had placed God back in the flux of real life instead of pushing him back to act as the conclusion of a chain of logical reasoning or, alternatively, forcing him into a heaven of eternal and fixed verities beyond the changing and largely ephemeral movements of the real world. The false God of Aristotelean Thomism was soon under fierce attack from within the ranks of the French Catholic church, and later even Thomists themselves took up the cudgels and from their own philosophy drew the tools with which to destroy the imposter.

The new approach to God by means of 'intuition' involved paying attention to the particulars of life - real events, unique features and special happenings. It marked a movement away from blanket explanations and general interpretations. The individual fact, the private experience, had to be taken into account. Blondel understood Bergson's method to mean: "la saisie profonde et totale d'une vérité unique. L'intuition bergsonienne consiste à discerner, à disjoindre des connexions hybrides, des oppositions trop facilement insoupçonnées ..." (p. 77).

1. The new approach can be seen clearly in Defever's La preuve réelle de Dieu (Desclée de Brouwer, 1953) and in Maritain's Approches de Dieu (Alsatia, also 1953).

Philosophers and critics have been so concerned to explain Bergson's philosophy in terms of its conclusions and assertions that far too little attention has been paid to its methodology. It is in this area that its influence has been most vital and most considerable.

There were also, of course, differences of opinion between Catholic thinkers and Bergson, but here again the influence of Bergson can be detected - this time as a catalyst and stimulant. It is no exaggeration to say that Maritain spent a great deal of time forming his response to Bergsonism and sharpening his own philosophy on the steel of Bergson's philosophical thrusts:

C'est en méditant [sur l'intelligence] qu'un fervent bergsonien a commencé à s'apercevoir des faiblesses du critique du concept sur laquelle Bergson insistait tant, et qu'après tout il démentait lui-même ...
(Le paysan de la Garonne, Desclée de Brouwer, 1966, p. 135).

Maurice Blondel also reacted to Bergsonism by defining more precisely his own positions. He, like Maritain, concluded that Bergson could help him in certain ways, but in the end a Catholic philosophy had to go further than Bergson was prepared to:

Le point de vue psychologique ne peut en effet se suffire, pas plus qu'aucune des perspectives scientifiques (Op. cit., p. 52).

Bergson had a philosophy of nature which amounted to a promising natural theology but his analyses had also revealed, according to Blondel, insufficiencies and a contingency which could only be resolved by an even wider view of life.

The overall impact of Bergson's new theory of knowledge was literally immense with regard to French Catholic thought. Maritain had this to say about it, looking back over many years of involvement and first-hand acquaintance with it:

J'ai dit que l'intuition intellectuelle de l'être n'a rien à voir avec l'intuition bergsonienne ... et que Bergson décrivait comme une sorte d'ineffable sympathie exigeant une torsion de la volonté sur elle-même; et surtout, elle ne portait pas directement sur l'être, mais seulement sur une durée qui n'est qu'un des aspects de l'être. Cela dit, il faut ajouter qu'à travers la durée c'est l'esse que de fait ... il atteignait en réalité et qu'en tout cas, le thomisme lui doit une fière chandelle, car si l'intuition de l'être n'a rien à voir avec son intuition, c'est cependant grâce à l'impact de son intuition, et de son génie métaphysique sur la pensée moderne ... que les thomistes contemporains ont enfin reconnu ... l'importance essentielle et absolument primordiale de l'intuition de l'être dans leur propre philosophie (Le paysan de la Garonne, pp. 205-206).

It is worth pointing out that the most important works of Bergson in influencing the French Catholics were without a doubt, first, L'Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience (1889), in which Bergson upheld the reality of free will and made significant use of the faculty of intuitive self-analysis. He also maintained the indivisible and consistent unity of the real self and opened the route to a new concept of the soul and indirectly of the spiritual life. Secondly, two articles were of utmost importance with regard to the idea of an 'intuitive' means to knowledge: these were "Introduction à la Métaphysique" (1903) and "L'Intuition philosophique" (1911), both reprinted in La Pensée et le Mouvant (1934). Paradoxically, the best-known work of Bergson - L'Evolution Créatrice (1907) - was undoubtedly the least influential among Catholics and, in fact, from the time of its publication, sustained long and bitter attacks and criticism from across the whole spectrum of Catholic thought, from Garrigou-Lagrange to Charles Péguy.

It has been well beyond the scope of this work to examine the long-term effects of the change in attitude among Catholics wrought by Bergson above all, but one cannot help wondering whether it was in large measure owing to Bergson that, whereas in Britain logical positivism was able to

maintain almost unchallenged that metaphysical statements were virtually meaningless, in France this type of approach has met with more robust opposition; with the result that French philosophy of the mid-twentieth century has had very largely different preoccupations from its counterpart in Britain, and, in addition, Christian metaphysical philosophy has always managed to retain some general influence in France through the works of such as Teilhard de Chardin and Gabriel Marcel.

The work of Charles Péguy, while not philosophy in the strict sense, nonetheless bears testimony to the width of vision of Bergson's preoccupations. In Péguy's meditations and diatribes we find Bergsonism applied to such diverse subjects as the inner significance of revolution, the sense of racial identity and the domination of modern life by economic considerations. This seems a far cry from the unfortunately myopic obsession of many British philosophers with the insoluble problems of how we know anything and what, if anything, we do know, and then the final 'reductio ad absurdum', what does it mean to know in the first place? Perhaps Bergson's answer to this would echo Socrates - "know thyself" - for this was the starting point and highway to his whole vision of life.

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OEUVRES (Ed. du centenaire, Textes annotés par A. Robinet; Introduction H. Gouhier, P.U.F., 1959)

This comprises four full-length works:

1. Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience (1889) (pp. 1-157).
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2. Matière et Mémoire: Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit (1896) (pp. 159-379).
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3. L'Evolution Créatrice (1907) (pp. 487-809).
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